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Reader's Digest

CANADA'S MOST-READ MAGAZINE

NOVEMBER 2023

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THE 2023 READER'S DIGEST TRUSTED BRAND™ AWARDS

Celebrating its **15th year** in 2023, Reader's Digest has conducted an annual Trusted Brand™ Study to uncover which brands Canadians trust above all. This year, over 4,000 votes were tallied to identify the #1 winning brands across 35 categories such as consumer packaged goods, insurance companies and Canadian retailers.

We are pleased to showcase a selection of 2023 Trusted Brand™ winners!

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- BEHR — Exterior Paint
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- SMIRNOFF — Cooler
- Casper — Mattress-in-a-box
- Tide — Laundry Detergent
- CAA — Travel Insurance Company
- TYLENOL — Pediatric Fever & Pain Reliever

For a list of all 2023 winners, visit trustedbrands.rd.ca

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Reader's Digest

PUBLISHED BY THE READER'S DIGEST MAGAZINES CANADA LIMITED, MONTREAL, CANADA

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Publications Mail Agreement No. 40070677. Postage paid at Montreal. Return undeliverable Canadian addresses to CP 38098 CSP Centennial Plaza, Dollard-des-Ormeaux, QC, H9B 3J2.

Print subscriptions, $35.50 a year, plus $8.99 postage, processing and handling. Please add applicable taxes. Outside Canada, $54.96 yearly, including postage, processing and handling. (Prices and postage subject to change without notice.) ISSN 0034-0413. Indexed by the Canadian Periodical Index. Single issue: $4.95.

Canada — We acknowledge with gratitude the financial support of the Government of Canada. / Nous remercions le Gouvernement du Canada pour son appui financier.

vividata — Alliance for Audited Media — Magazines du Québec

Reader's Digest publishes 10 issues per year and may occasionally publish special issues (special issues count as two), subject to change without notice.

World of
GOOD
REASONS TO SMILE

Beauty on the Street

JAPAN IS HOME to iconic landmarks such as the ancient temples of Kyoto and the neon-lit skyscrapers of Tokyo. But you'll be wowed by what's at your feet, too: Since the 1980s, Japan has taken a creative approach to beautifying its manhole covers. Roughly 6,000 of these metal plates also serve as canvases depicting the cultural symbols, events and regions in which they are found. British-Australian photographer Remo Camerota, who documented them for his book *Drainspotting,* says, "Finding them is the best part. It feels like a treasure hunt."



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EVERYDAY HEROES



Thorleifsson (pictured with his family in Reykjavik) using one of the ramps built by his non-profit.

Bridging the Gap

Meet the entrepreneur making Iceland more accessible

BY *Claire Sibonney*

LATE ONE NIGHT in July 2020 in Reykjavik, where the sun never fully sets in summer, Haraldur (Halli) Thorleifsson was wandering around the city's main shopping street with his wife and two kids. It was shortly after they had moved from the United States back to his home country of Iceland, so they were jet-lagged and couldn't sleep.

During their walk, his three-year-old son was thirsty and wanted a drink from the corner store. But Thorleifsson

COURTESY OF HARALDUR (HALLI) THORLEIFSSON

soon discovered he couldn't help with the simple request: A 20-centimetre step blocked his access to the store.

The barrier was all too familiar. Born with muscular dystrophy, which causes progressive weakness and loss of muscle, Thorleifsson, now 46, has been using a wheelchair since he was 25. As he waited outside the shop for his wife and children, he recalls, "I thought about how very strange it is that we separate families in this way. I thought about all the times I wasn't able to join my friends at restaurants, pubs and stores that are inaccessible."

Living all over the world as a creative director and digital designer in cities such as San Francisco, Tokyo and Buenos Aires, Thorleifsson had witnessed first-hand how different cities consider and plan for accessibility, from ramps and sidewalks to public transportation.

Having recently sold his digital creative agency, Ueno, to Twitter (now X), Thorleifsson now had the financial means to make a difference in his hometown. He decided to start with a project to make Iceland wheelchair accessible, one ramp at a time.

Ramp Up Reykjavik launched as a non-profit in 2021 with a goal to build 100 ramps, mostly in the city's downtown, within a year. Unlike portable and temporary solutions in other cities, these ramps are permanent structures that match the aesthetic of the buildings, making them appear as if they've always been there. It's a design detail that helps provide a sense of inclusivity: These ramps, and those who need to use them, belong here. Thorleifsson says it was important to provide a permanent fix, not a temporary solution.

With the help of government funding and other sponsors, the Ramp Up team finished ahead of schedule and has broadened its scope to all of Iceland, with the goal of building 1,500 ramps countrywide—at a cost of about 400 million Icelandic krona—by 2026.

"We want our society to be inclusive," Iceland's president, Guðni Thorlacius Jóhannesson, told *Reader's Digest*. "That means we must ensure equal accessibility for all. This should be obvious, yet the Ramp Up project has opened our eyes not only to the need for improvement but also to how easy it is to get things done when we all join hands. Halli has led by example."

In three short years, Thorleifsson has become a legend in his hometown, where he's known as a "benevolent tech titan." He was named Iceland's Person of the Year in 2022 by four of the country's main media outlets. He also runs a trendy cafe and cinema and opened the country's largest co-working space.

Thorleifsson is proud that Ramp Up has motivated others to act. He recently met a woman who was inspired to build a ramp at her home, allowing her friend of 30 years who uses a wheelchair to easily visit.

"Equal access to society is definitely not something that is a reality yet," says Thorleifsson. But as he's learned, change starts with just one person.



GOOD NEWS
FROM AROUND THE WORLD

BY *Robert Liwanag*

Cans for Cars founder Sam Tucker.

FIXING CARS FOR THOSE IN NEED

COMMUNITY Collecting enough empties to buy a car may sound impossible, but the residents of Mooloolah Valley in Queensland, Australia, know it isn't. Since 2018, the non-profit Cans for Cars has been fixing up used vehicles and donating them to those in need—using only recyclables to raise funds.

Knowing that drink cans can be recycled for 10 cents apiece, 41-year-old mechanic and Cans for Cars founder Sam Tucker began collecting recyclables from locals. It took 40,000 cans and 18 months to buy the first car, a 2001 Ford Fiesta. Tucker paid around $260 for it and spent a further $1,100 on replacement parts before donating it to a local non-profit supporting women in crisis. So far, Cans for Cars has bought, repaired and donated 18 cars.

At first, Tucker drove around the neighbourhood in search of people in need of a car. As word got out, people began sending tips for potential candidates, including a family who lost their home to flooding in 2022. "I was able to supply this young mother with a car, which helped her get a job and helped her kids get back into school," he says.

Tucker plans to build a workshop to serve as headquarters. "It is really having an impact at the ground level," he says. "That's why I believe Cans for Cars has had the success that it has."

MATTHEW ABBOTT

Hope for Patients with a Rare Disease

HEALTH Doctors in the United Kingdom's National Health Service (NHS) saved the life of a two-year-old girl in February 2023 by administering a groundbreaking new drug that uses the patient's own stem cells. Teddi Shaw became the U.K.'s first recipient of Libmeldy, one of the world's most expensive drugs—and there are plans to increase access to it in the U.K.

Shaw suffered from metachromatic leukodystrophy (MLD), a rare and deadly hereditary disease that damages the nervous system and causes loss of hearing, memory and motor skills. Libmeldy, the only approved gene therapy for MLD, comes with a price tag of more than $4 million for each infusion.

Earlier this year, the drug's manufacturer struck a deal with the NHS to offer it to U.K. patients like Shaw at a major discount (the details of which have not been released). Plans are also underway to make the drug more affordable in the Nordic region.

Using AI to Protect Endangered Animals

TECHNOLOGY Gabon is home to endangered wildlife like chimpanzees and elephants, which are threatened by illegal hunters looking for ivory tusks or bush meat. Dutch company Hack the Planet is helping local anti-poaching teams protect the country's rich wildlife using artificial intelligence technology.

The company's engineers have equipped cameras with AI that can identify humans. When a poacher is detected, the system takes photos and alerts nearby rangers.

The cameras have been in use in Gabon since 2021. Hack the Planet hopes they can eventually be used to protect wildlife in conservation projects around the world.

Savvy Fixes for Food Waste

INNOVATION Each year, a third of all food around the world—roughly 1.3 billion tonnes—goes to waste. Rebread, a start-up in Krakow, Poland, wants to alleviate that. When they found themselves with many unsold loaves in their artisanal bakery during the early days of the Covid-19 pandemic, founders Katarzyna Młynarczyk and Bartłomiej Rak employed a traditional distillation process to turn the stale bread into a unique alcoholic spirit they call Okowita, now sold in stores across Poland.

Along with local scientists, Rebread is testing more ways to put stale bread to use, including as a component in biodegradable packaging, an ingredient in soft drinks and as the primary material used in 3-D printing.



BENJAMIN TAGUEMOUNT/GETTY IMAGES

LIFE'S LIKE THAT



"Let's dig deeper. What makes you use sad emoji?"

Late one night, my front doorbell rang. This made me a bit nervous, so I texted my neighbour to see if someone had knocked on their door, too. It was only later that I realized a mistake in my text: I'd also told my neighbour I was "licking" my back patio door. I have since reiterated that I don't do that. They were relieved.
—AUDREY BEATTY, *Sudbury, Ont.*

Our son is an officer on a large tugboat delivering fuel up and down the West Coast, so he spends many hours at the helm checking navigation, looking for shoals and various other hazards. He chuckles when he recalls one of his high school teachers telling him he would never get a job "just sitting and gazing out the window."
—BOB AND CAROL PETRIE, *Salmon Arm, B.C.*

While I was sick with Covid-19 and isolating in our basement, my husband made countless trips up and down the stairs to bring me meals. I felt bad for him so I said, "We need a dumbwaiter." He said, "We have one!"
—KATHRYN LEIER, *Onanole, Man.*

Send us your funny stories! You could earn $50 and be featured in the magazine. See page 2 or rd.ca/joke for details.

PAUL KALES/CARTOONSTOCK.COM



Red Alert

Some U.S. states may soon require warning labels about certain food dyes. Should Canada follow suit?

BY *Debby Waldman*

THAT ARTIFICIAL FOOD dyes are unhealthy is not news. Some of the most common ones—used to colour everything from M&M's to soup—are known to cause hyperactivity in some children, affecting their ability to learn. But regulatory agencies around the world don't necessarily agree on which ones are a problem and why.

That may soon change, thanks to increasing consumer pressure and a comprehensive 2021 peer-reviewed report prepared by the State of California's Office of Environmental Health Hazard Assessment (OEHHA), which

ILLUSTRATIONS BY *Kate Traynor*

concluded that synthetic food dyes "cause or exacerbate neurobehavioural problems in some children" and that the current levels deemed safe by the federal government are too high.

In response to the report and a subsequent petition signed by children's advocates, consumer-advocacy groups and health and environmental experts, California is now considering requiring warning labels on food products and supplements containing the seven most commonly used synthetic dyes. Among them are Red 40, Yellow 5 and Yellow 6 (known in Canada as Allura Red, tartrazine and Sunset Yellow FCF, respectively), which account for more than 90 percent of food dye certified for use in the United States. Restaurants in California would also have to identify menu items containing the additives.

What makes the OEHHA report a game changer is that a regulatory agency is on the same page as scientists and advocacy groups. That's largely due to the quality of the report, says Lisa Lefferts, an environmental-health consultant and one of 10 original signatories to the petition. "It's quite simply the best, most comprehensive, most rigorous assessment on the neurobehavioural effects of synthetic food dyes in children that has ever been done."

The warning-label requirement would put California on par with the European Union, which since 2010 has required food and beverage products containing certain synthetic food dyes to carry warning labels about their adverse effect on activity and attention in kids.

But there is currently no such move afoot in Canada. Marie-Pier Burelle, media-relations advisor at Health Canada, told *Reader's Digest*, "Based on available scientific data, it is the opinion of Health Canada that synthetic food-colouring agents do not pose a health risk to the general population when used according to their permitted uses set out in the Lists of Permitted Food Additives." Since 2016, Health Canada has required food labels to list individual food-dye colours so consumers can make informed choices, should they choose to avoid these additives.

"IF YOU LIMIT THE KINDS OF FOODS THAT CONTAIN DYES, YOU AUTOMATICALLY IMPROVE YOUR DIET."

Ultimately, synthetic dyes are used in foods for one reason: to make products look prettier. Bill Jeffery, executive director of the Ottawa-based Centre for Health and Science Law, likens the practice to "putting cosmetics on food."

Bright colours and fun shapes make candies and cereals appealing, especially to kids. But dyes are also in some applesauce products, marshmallows, cake mixes, salad dressings and more.

As research emerges, consumer pressure has led companies to reformulate



products sold on both sides of the border, most notably the iconic Kraft Dinner. In 2016, the company began using turmeric, annatto and paprika instead of tartrazine (Yellow 5) and Sunset Yellow FCF (Yellow 6). Around the same time, Chipotle eateries, Nestlé USA and some other restaurants and manufacturers announced plans to cut back on or stop using synthetic dyes.

In Europe, it was the 2010 label legislation that triggered companies to reformulate. “Companies do not want to put a warning label on their product,” says Lefferts, explaining that many food manufacturers would rather change their ingredients than use dyes that trigger a label requirement.

That’s why Starburst Fruit Chews sold in Europe are coloured with natural products, not the dyes that make their North American counterparts potentially harmful. Allura Red (Red 40), for instance, was found to exacerbate colitis in mice in a 2022 study at McMaster University in Hamilton.

More research is needed, but given that artificial food dyes are ultimately superfluous, experts agree we’re better off without them.

After all, points out Joe Schwarcz, a chemistry professor and director of the Office for Science and Society at McGill University in Montreal, we don’t dye fresh fruits and vegetables, but we do dye candy, donuts and sprinkles. “The foods in which you find dyes are nutritional paupers,” he says. “If you limit foods that contain them, you automatically improve your diet.”

News FROM THE
WORLD OF MEDICINE
BY *Samantha Rideout*





HERBS AND SPICES ARE GUT FRIENDLY

Herbs and spices are a healthier flavour additive than salt. But they're also good for your gut microbiome, according to a study published last year in *The Journal of Nutrition*. Participants added 24 herbs and spices (such as ginger, basil and cinnamon) to their diet. After four weeks, those who'd sprinkled even just a teaspoon a day onto their meals had an increased variety of microbes in their digestive tracts. Like in other ecosystems, a diverse gut microbiome is considered healthy and resilient.

Diagnosing Parkinson's Sooner

Currently, doctors diagnose Parkinson's disease based on its symptoms. But the ailments that often appear first—e.g., constipation, depression—are shared by many other medical conditions. Patients may not get a more certain diagnosis until years later, when the tremors and stiffness of Parkinson's appear.

That uncertainty may soon change thanks to new lab tests that detect abnormalities in a protein called alpha-synuclein. One such test, a spinal tap, was recently validated in a large American trial. It identified 88 percent of the participants with Parkinson's disease and gave a "false positive" to less than five percent of the people who didn't have it.

When Obesity Is Genetic

Diet and inactivity are not the only things that can contribute to obesity; other factors range from age to medications to sleep habits. There are also certain genes that increase the likelihood of obesity (defined by a body-mass index, or BMI, of 30 or higher). According to Swedish researchers, obesity affects your health differently depending on the cause. Specifically, people with a high BMI and a genetic predisposition to obesity had a lower heart disease risk compared to people whose extra weight is related to environmental and lifestyle factors alone.

PHOTOGRAPH BY ADAM VOORHES; PROP STYLIST: ROBIN FINLAY



Opioid-Free Back Pain Relief

If you're looking for a painkiller to relieve lower back pain but want to avoid potentially addictive opioids, the main options are acetaminophen and non-steroidal anti-inflammatory drugs (NSAIDs), such as ibuprofen or naproxen. According to a German-led review, combining the two types brings more relief than NSAIDs do alone. (And the study found that while NSAIDs alone can help, acetaminophen by itself doesn't work better than a placebo for this kind of pain.) To find out what might be the best combination for you, speak to your doctor.

Insights Into Midlife Libido

Menopause plays a role in women's lower sex drives at midlife, but so do everyday pressures. Investigators at the London School of Hygiene and Tropical Medicine and the University of Glasgow analyzed data from 2,133 women and interviewed some of them in the 45 to 59 age range. The women were most likely to blame a low sex drive and low level of sexual activity on pressures from their jobs, raising children, caring for aging relatives, dealing with health issues and shouldering most of the housework.

People might find it comforting to learn it's common to be less sexually active at this stage of life, the researchers said, and that frequency isn't the most important influence on a satisfying sex life: For the participants who were the most sexually satisfied, a feeling of closeness and intimacy in the relationship mattered more. And that can come from simply feeling supported—a good reminder to seek help if you are feeling overwhelmed.

This Boosts Brain Power

Regardless of the setting, exercise is good for brain function. But it's especially beneficial when done in pleasant outdoor surroundings, concluded a small Canadian study. Students at the University of Victoria took cognitive-function tests before and after 15-minute walks. On one day, they walked inside, and on another, they followed a forested path. Their cognitive test performance was better after the outdoor stroll. R



(PILLS) WLADIMIR BULGAR/SCIENCE PHOTO LIBRARY/GETTY IMAGES; (SHOES) YASINGUNEYSU/GETTY IMAGES

LAUGHTER
THE BEST *Medicine*

Whenever I'm feeling down, I remember the company dinner I was at when one of our interns turned to our CEO and asked, "Who are you?"

—@KATJOLEWIS *on X*

On a cool spring evening, my mom and I biked to a local ice cream stand and met my husband and son, who drove there.

They arrived before us, so my husband said to my son, "We have to wait for Beppe," using the Frisian term for grandmother. A man standing nearby overheard this and said "Beppe? She must be Frisian." My husband replied, "Yes, especially since she's biking here!"

—OLIVIA CONWAY, *Taber, Alta.*

My family and I were travelling to Saskatchewan one year. On the way, we saw a large sign attached to a cemetery fence in Medicine Hat, Alberta, that said "Open House Today."

—PAT DERKSEN, *Lethbridge, Alta.*

There were three men in suits in my coffee shop. One of them said, "My personal idea of progress is moving things forward." Which is the definition of the word.

—@STILLORANGED *on X*

After his jewellery store was robbed five times in two weeks by the same thief, the police asked the owner if he could give them a description of the robber.

"Yes," said the owner. "He was dressed a little better each time he robbed the store."

—DAVIS SINGLETARY

The hotel receptionist asked me, "How do you find your room?" I thought, *Is this a test?* But I replied anyway: "Go up to the third floor, turn right, and it's the second door in the hallway."

I only realized later that that's not what she meant.

—AN XIU XIE, *Edmonton*

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Art of
LIVING
FOOD, FACTS & FUN



World, Meet Poutine

It could soon be the world's biggest new comfort-food trend

BY *Leila El Shennawy*

WALK INTO ANY casual eatery in Montreal after a night out and you'll come across diners digging into plates piled high with poutine. Born in Quebec, this artery-clogging decadence—fries topped with cheddar cheese curds and doused with beef gravy—is finding fans around the world.

Why? It's a triple threat: Crispy fries. Curds with a squeaky-on-the-teeth quality. Gravy thin enough to seep down through the pile but thick enough to easily be sopped up by a forkful of fries and gravy-softened curds.

The word "poutine" likely comes from the Quebecois slang for a "mess."

TMB STUDIO

PHOTOGRAPHS BY *K. Synold*

Or it could have evolved from *pouding* (pudding).

Sylvain Charlebois, a food economist and the author of *Poutine Nation*, confirms that the earliest version of the dish appeared in 1957 in the Quebec dairy town of Warwick. A hungry customer named Eddy Lainesse asked restaurateur Fernand Lachance to put cheese curds and fries together in a brown paper bag because he was in a hurry. Lachance obliged and, as the tale goes, said, "*Ça va faire une maudite poutine*!"—"That'll make a damn mess!"

HE HAD TO FIND OUT WHY POUTINE IS THE MOST POPULAR CANADIAN DISH AROUND THE WORLD.

The combination became a hit in *casse-croûte* (snack shacks) across the province. But then poutine boarded the gravy train in 1964 in the town of Drummondville. The young owner of Le Roy Jucep diner, Jean-Paul Roy—who just so happened to be a trained saucier—was the first to dare to douse the fries and curds with gravy.

Poutine is a symbol of pride in Quebec, but of course the rest of Canada has fully embraced the delicious mess. Most of the big fast-food chains—KFC, Wendy's, McDonald's, Harvey's, A&W—have it on their menus. And Smoke's Poutinerie, with dozens of locations, has more than 20 choices, including a "Philly cheesesteak" version with slices of flatiron steak, cheese sauce and red peppers.

Now, poutine is popping up on menus outside our borders. Google the city you're in and you're bound to find poutine spots. That includes in London, Paris, New York, Shanghai, Tokyo, Moscow (where it has been nicknamed "raspoutine") and even posh Monaco.

Charlebois says he wrote *Poutine Nation* because "I had to find out why this unhealthy but delicious dish has become the most popular Canadian dish around the world." As part of his research, Charlebois sampled poutine in dozens of cities—from a surprisingly good version in Brisbane, Australia, to a lacklustre plate in Cleveland, Ohio. "They served me a poutine with powdered mozzarella," he says. "But I was polite about it."

Charlebois compares the story of poutine to pizza's glorious rise to fame: an unfussy combo of carbs, cheese and sauce, something unsophisticated but so tasty it became a global sensation.

Whether it's ever going to be as universally popular as pizza is anyone's guess. But, as Charlebois boldly declares, "It took 100 years for pizza to get there. And poutine will be around for a very long time."

If you haven't yet, give poutine a chance. You may just find that the unpretentious dish is so much more than the sum of its parts.

TMB STUDIO



AS KIDS SEE IT



I've discovered that my daughter got confused by the word "editor" and instead tells people that her mom is a predator.
—@MISSMULROONEY *on X*

Every year when my husband and I return from our annual trip to the Caribbean, we bring home musical instruments for our grandchildren. After several years of doing this, their collection is vast, and we feel we've exhausted all of our sources. On hearing that we might not be bringing back a new instrument this time, our granddaughter cried, "But Grandma, we don't have any bagpipes!"
—SALLY BROWN, *Port Hope, Ont.*

I normally walk my dog after work, but one morning I decided to take him out before I left. When we arrived back home, my neighbour's six-year-old daughter was leaving for school.

CARTOON BY *Ralph Hagen*

I asked a primary-school student, "If three chocolates cost six dollars, how much would a dozen chocolates cost?" The student replied, "Who is buying all this chocolate?"

—DEEPAK VOHRA, *White Rock, B.C.*

She waved at me, then asked, "Were you out walking all night?"

—TARA WANAMAKER, *Barrie, Ont.*

My four-year-old son and I were lying on our backs, peacefully looking up at the sky. I commented, "Look at the beautiful colours of the trees, the puffy white clouds and the blue sky."

My son said, "It's nice, Mommy. Was the world still black and white when you were little?"

—CHARLENE CLASSON, *Chilliwack, B.C.*

My grandson Seth: "I wish you could go on the cruise with us."
Me: "So do I."
Seth: "Maybe we could squeeze you into a suitcase."
Me: "I doubt it."
Seth: "I don't think you'd see very much, though."

—ELSA PATERSON, *Saint John, N.B.*

A kindergarten teacher was talking about the late Queen Elizabeth II's crown and how beautiful it was. The teacher asked, "Does anyone know someone with a crown?"

One student raised her hand and said, "My grandma has a crown."

"That's nice," the teacher responded. "Does she wear it?"

The student replied, "No, she eats with it."

—MISIR DOOBAY, *Scarborough, Ont.*

I received this letter in the mail from my school-aged son: "Dear John A. Doe, I am writing this letter to you because this is a class assignment, and I am forced to do this. I had to prove I could use the format of a business letter. Do not take this letter as something important to you, because it is for my education. Sincerely, John M. Doe."

—JENNIFER BRETT KOOISTRA, *Gads Hill, Ont.*

Eight-year-old: "Can I have a snack?"
Me: "Will you still have room for dinner?"
Eight-year-old: "Not if I do it right."

—@XPLODINGUNICORN *on X*

Send us your funny stories! You could earn $50 and be featured in the magazine. See page 2 or rd.ca/joke for details.

13 THINGS



High-Flying Facts About Drones

BY *Marc Saltzman*

1 DRONES, OR unmanned aerial vehicles, may seem like recent technology, but the earliest iteration took flight in 1849, during the First Italian War of Independence. An Austrian artillery lieutenant, Franz Von Uchatius, used pilotless balloons packed with explosives to attack Venice. The attack was mostly unsuccessful; some balloons even blew back to Austria.

2 ABRAHAM KAREM (the "Dronefather"), a Baghdad-born, Israeli-raised engineer, built the first modern drone for reconnaissance during the Yom Kippur War, in the early 1970s. After immigrating to the United States, Karem went on to design the MQ-1 Predator drone, which fired its first combat missile over Afghanistan in October 2001, transforming the strategy and tactics of military combat.

Today, drones play a pivotal role in the Russia-Ukraine war. In addition to being used for reconnaissance, combat drones have struck both Moscow and Kyiv. Drones have also been used to drop food and medical

ILLUSTRATION BY *Serge Bloch*

supplies to Russian-occupied territories in Ukraine.

3 MILITARY DRONES resemble small airplanes and can cost more than US$15 million, but mini versions (sometimes called "quadcopters") look more like small helicopters and are available at retailers like Amazon and Walmart for as little as $40. Most are remotely operated via either a controller or a smartphone app, but some models can fly autonomously thanks to GPS, sensors, software and cameras that help them avoid obstacles.

4 BEFORE YOU take to the sky, you'll need to register your drone with Transport Canada and be at least 14 years of age (unless it's a toy drone and weighs less than 250 grams). Of the more than 337,468 drones in Canada, around 74 percent are used purely for fun. Some countries require third-party liability insurance, and in Europe, users must be at least 16, and drones are banned from flying in urban areas.

5 GPS TRACKING prevents drones from entering "no-fly" zones, such as airports and government facilities. The drone will either automatically turn around and go back to the user or land itself. If a drone has been illegally modified to enter a no-fly zone, it could be shot down by authorities or electronically "jammed" so it falls out of the sky. The user could face a hefty fine or even imprisonment.

6 BE CAUTIOUS about flying a drone over private residential property: Residents have a right to privacy, meaning drones should not be used to hover near or peer into windows. If you believe you're being recorded by a drone, report it.

Not surprisingly, celebrities have become targets of "paparazzi drones." In 2020, Prince Harry and Meghan Markle filed a lawsuit against paparazzi for flying a drone above their California home and capturing photos of their son.

7 PEOPLE NOW race drones just like they do cars—but the speeds are far faster. Some drones can go from 0 to 145 kilometres per hour in less than one second! The first "World Drone Prix" was held in Dubai in 2016. A teen from the United Kingdom won the US$250,000 grand prize after manoeuvring his drone through 12 laps of the 780-metre course the fastest.

8 USING CAMERAS, along with sensors that can detect body heat, search-and-rescue drones help locate missing people and animals. They're used in hard-to-reach areas such as a dense forest or mountainous ski hill, and can even search under rubble in the aftermath of a

natural disaster—as was the case in Turkey following the magnitude-7.8 earthquake earlier this year.

9 DRONES ALSO help authorities nab criminals. In 2016, authorities in Alameda, California, used a drone to track a suspect and record video of them discarding drugs and guns, which led to their arrest. Wildlife conservationists are also using them to catch elephant and rhinoceros poachers in Botswana, Malawi, South Africa and Zimbabwe.

10 BUT SOMETIMES it's criminals who are using the drones. In 2022, 20 people were arrested for using drones to smuggle contraband, including drugs, weapons, cash and cellphones, into Lee Correctional Institution in Bishopville, South Carolina.

11 A DRONE may one day deliver your online order to your balcony or doorstep. Delivery drones are being tested in Canada, the U.S., the U.K., Europe and Australia. In 2021, a company called Drone Delivery Canada was used to deliver pharmaceuticals and Covid-19 tests between British Columbia's Village of Fraser Lake and Stellat'en First Nation.

12 NOT ONLY are drones a more environmentally friendly delivery method—most small drones are powered by batteries—but they can help the planet in other ways, too. Conservationists and researchers are using them to monitor endangered species, and the Great Barrier Reef Foundation used them to conduct a census of green turtles. Meanwhile, in Canada, a start-up called Flash Forest is using drones in an effort to reforest areas of the country that have been devastated by wildfires. During flight, these drones drop tree "seed pods" across landscape that's too dangerous for humans to traverse.

13 SOON ENOUGH, we might be flying in drones ourselves! The first "passenger drone" was unveiled in 2016 by EHang, a Chinese company. It's still going through rigorous testing. Perhaps one day we'll take one to work and fly over rush-hour traffic—without needing a pilot's licence. R

The Power of One

One machine can do the work of 50 ordinary men. No machine can do the work of one extraordinary man.

ELBERT HUBBARD

QUOTABLE QUOTES



You need somebody in your corner who believes in you in those moments when you don't believe in yourself. You can just hang onto their faith until yours comes back.

—Angela Bassett, ACTOR, IN *THE NEW YORKER*

THE OCEAN IS THE LIFEBLOOD OF THE PLANET. WE SHOULD HAVE CALLED IT PLANET WATER, NOT PLANET EARTH.

—Geoff Green, EDUCATOR AND EXPEDITION LEADER, IN *CANADIAN GEOGRAPHIC*

A piece of art is its own little world, one that conjures the feeling that everything is as it should be, with nothing wasted and nothing missing.

—Michael Christie, AUTHOR, IN *THE WALRUS*

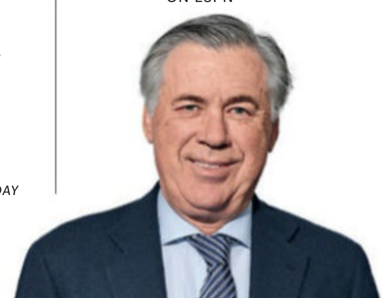


WHEN YOU'RE THROUGH CHANGING, YOU'RE THROUGH.

—Martha Stewart, BUSINESSWOMAN, ON *TODAY*

FAILURE IS WHEN YOU DON'T TRY TO DO SOMETHING AS WELL AS YOU CAN. WHEN YOU TRY TO DO YOUR BEST, YOU HAVE A CLEAR CONSCIENCE, AND THAT'S NEVER A FAILURE.

—Carlo Ancelotti, REAL MADRID MANAGER, ON ESPN



(BASSETT) JOHN SHEARER/WIREIMAGE/GETTY IMAGES; (STEWART) JOHN SHEARER/WIREIMAGE/GETTY IMAGES; (ANCELOTTI) TONY MCARDLE/EVERTON/GETTY IMAGES





THREE PEOPLE WHO EACH FACED A CLOSE CALL WITH DEATH—AND LIVED TO TELL ABOUT IT

SURVIVED!

AS TOLD TO *Lisa Fitterman*

ILLUSTRATIONS BY *Kagan McLeod*

I SURVIVED MY FLOODED APARTMENT

CHRISTIAN FLEISCHMANN, 33

IT WAS 1:20 IN THE MORNING on July 15, 2021. I had just gone to bed, a bit drunk after celebrating my 31st birthday. I'd had some friends over to my basement apartment, in my sister's house.

We live in Sinzig, just south of Bonn, Germany. The town is about half a kilometre from the banks of the Ahr River, and it had been raining buckets that week; there were flood warnings and evacuation orders for some of the nearby areas, but not where I was.

As a precaution, I'd placed sandbags outside my garden door and piled electronics and clothing on tables and the couch just in case water managed to seep through. Before my friends left, they laughed at me for doing that, but I thought, *Why take a chance?*

As I drifted off to sleep, I was awakened by the sound of rushing water, like I was beside a waterfall instead of in my bedroom. When I swung my legs off the bed, I was shocked to feel cold water already up to my knees and rising fast.

It must be a burst pipe in the bathroom, I thought. Shivering and in darkness, I grabbed my phone and turned on its flashlight. When I stepped into the hall, I saw it wasn't a burst pipe. Water was coming—like a geyser, or a pressure washer—from the garden door. It must have breached the sandbags. Chairs, bookshelves and pieces of my drum set were floating all over my living room.

I could feel the adrenalin surging through my body as panic began to set in. The Ahr, usually such a quiet, slow-moving river in my region, had violently burst its banks. And now I had to get out—fast!

Any effects of the alcohol were gone; fear sobers one up. I heard the garden door starting to rip apart, the pieces of wood cracking like matchsticks under the pressure of the flood. The sound was like nothing else, screeching, hissing and crashing all at once. Relentless.

With the water now up to my waist, in bare feet and with my boxer shorts plastered to my body, I started to wade to my only escape: the door that leads upstairs to the rest of the house. All around me things were breaking—the lamps were shattering; the fridge and cupboards were being torn apart.

Finally I made it to the door that leads upstairs and tried to pull it open, but the pressure of the water was immense. Every time I opened the door a bit, it slammed shut again.

I looked around for anything I could use to wedge the door open. In the corner there was a broom, a coat rack, and a huge, heavy sword from a medieval fair. I grabbed them all and, once again, pried open the door, throwing the broom and coat rack between the door and the frame to keep it from shutting and using the sword to wedge it open some more. I managed to make a gap of about 30 centimetres, enough for me to squeeze through and make it into the hallway.

In the pitch black, I leaped onto the stairs leading up to the rest of the house and ran to the third floor. I knocked on my sister's door like crazy, trying to find out if she was okay, until I remembered that she wasn't staying there that night.

I STOOD THERE IN THE DARKNESS, SOAKED AND PANTING, STARING AT WHAT WAS NOW A WATERSCAPE.

That's when I went downstairs to the main floor office—and went outside. I stood there in the darkness, soaked and panting, staring at what was now a waterscape with debris, branches and trees floating in it. The river had flooded the neighbourhood—and as my adrenalin receded, I realized that if I had woken up just a few minutes later, I would have drowned.

We've been assured that something like this happens only once every 100 years. I hope so. More than 180 people died and parts of villages in the region were entirely washed away.

These days, I'm living at my parents' place in the middle of town. I study psychology and work with children in schools, teaching them martial arts. I can never go back to live in that apartment because I just keep thinking, *What if it does happen again?* There are too many traumatic memories.

We didn't have flood insurance because the house wasn't considered to be in a high-risk area, so we're fixing it up on our own. Many of the houses around us were destroyed, including a home for people with disabilities. It was so awful. Not everyone got out.

My old apartment will now house my martial arts school, once it's repaired and dried out.

In the end, I think the experience made me grateful and determined to live each day to its fullest. I came very close to drowning that day. But rather than dwell on what could have happened, I prefer to recall what my mother told me afterwards: "Christian, don't remember the day when you lost everything. Remember the day you survived."

I SURVIVED A PARACHUTE MALFUNCTION

JORDAN HATMAKER, 36

NOVEMBER 14, 2021, was a perfect day for skydiving: sunny, with little wind. I was a novice solo jumper; I'd jumped only 14 times before, not enough to be licensed. It scared me, for sure, but a little fear always makes you a better risk taker, right? That's what drew me to skydiving in the first place. I've always been extreme.

It took about 40 minutes to drive from my home to the hangar outside Suffolk, Virginia; it was in an area with lots of empty land and airspace.

I went up in the plane with a group of about 15 for a first jump at around 1:30 p.m., and it was beautiful. From the start, I went through the safety procedures with my coach that day—a ritual you do for every jump, no matter how much jumping experience you have had. This includes pointing from the plane door to the drop zone—where you land—4,100 metres below, so you can direct your jump.

Then we jumped; me first, then my coach. We were in freefall at some 200 kilometres an hour, descending about 300 metres every five seconds. It was exhilarating and terrifying all at once, with the world opening up before me, coming into focus in mere seconds, even though it felt a lot longer.

The wind eddies carried me for the freefall, and at about 1,200 metres, I deployed my pilot chute—the small parachute used to extract the main one. After the main chute was released and inflated, I had about a minute to enjoy the peace and quiet as I floated gently to the ground, the grass quickly coming into focus. I felt invincible.

Not long after, we went up again for a second jump. The mood on the plane was light—lots of joking, lots of laughing. My coach and I went through the same safety routine, then we jumped.

After 30 seconds, at around 1,680 metres, we tracked away from each other because you need lots of empty space to safely deploy your parachute. I looked at my altimeter and realized I was lower than I'd thought. The ground was coming up so fast! I knew I had to pull the pilot chute at roughly 1,200 metres, like I'd done the last time, but I was caught off guard and rushed to pull my chute without taking the time to stabilize my body position. When I pulled it, instead of releasing into the airstream to inflate, the pilot chute wrapped around my right leg.

The chute was pulling my right leg up like a ballerina's, while the main parachute remained in its bag. *Just get it off,* I told myself calmly. I wasted about seven seconds trying—unsuccessfully—to get untangled; I should have opened the reserve chute right away. (It's a backup for when the main one isn't working.)

With the ground rapidly coming into focus below me, I prepared to crash. I didn't think it would be a catastrophic impact—*Maybe you'll break a leg,* I thought. I've always been an optimist.

Then, suddenly, the reserve parachute opened. I managed to gain some control, steering myself toward some grass, hoping for a softer landing.

I had just a few seconds to feel some relief. Then the main parachute released from its bag. It inflated, and the two parachutes began pulling in opposite directions, causing me to accelerate hard and fast toward the ground, not far from the drop zone.

When I crashed, my body felt like it was on fire. I tried to get up because that's what you're supposed to do if you don't land on your feet, to show you're okay. But I couldn't. I couldn't move anything below my waist. So I lay there,



my face in the grass, my arms flung out to either side, and I screamed. "Please, somebody help!" In between calling for help, I prayed out loud. "Please, God, don't let me be paralyzed."

I lay with my face buried in the grass, fully conscious, for about five minutes before people from the skydiving club got there. They quickly surrounded me, eager to help, but there was nothing they could do. It was too risky to move me before the paramedics arrived. But I didn't understand that yet, and they had to listen to me swearing and yelling at them to help me as the shock wore off and the pain really set in.

When the first two paramedics arrived by ambulance, half an hour later, they tried to move me onto a board for transport, but it hurt so much, I screamed. Then I heard the helicopter.

The air-ambulance crew came equipped with ketamine, which sent me to la-la land, and I was transported to the nearest trauma centre.

In the end, my injuries were pretty intense: a shattered ankle, broken shin and a spinal injury that caused a spinal-fluid leak. No one could tell me if I would walk again, but I was determined, and in February 2022, just three months after the crash, I walked again for the first time. I began a heavy course of physiotherapy that I'm still doing. But, after being unable to lift my legs because of the accident, last November I was actually able to climb to Everest base camp.

Oh, and I plan to skydive again—only I haven't told my parents yet.

I SURVIVED A "SNOWNADO" TRAPPED IN MY CAR

SHANNON ST. ONGE, 38

THE SNOWSTORM WAS SUPPOSED to hit on the evening of Monday, January 31, 2022. I was working from home but I had to leave that afternoon and go to my office at First Nations University in Regina so I could sign an emergency bursary cheque for a student. As the director of finance, I wanted to get it to him as soon as possible, Saskatchewan snowstorm or not. Besides, I wasn't worried. I figured I had lots of time to make it to the office and get back home.

The route to the university takes about 30 minutes, straight east along the Trans-Canada Highway on land as flat as a pancake. When I got there, my colleague came to my office to co-sign the cheque, then he left for the day. As I was packing up, I noticed he had left his laptop bag in my office.

"Shoot," he said when I called him. "I'm already home."

"I can bring it to you," I assured him. It was just past 4:30 p.m. The snow wasn't supposed to start until later, but just to be safe, I decided to use the country roads near his home instead of the highway, which could fast become a skating rink. On the way, I filled up my SUV with gas and picked up two stuffed-crust pizzas because I'd promised my 15-year-old daughter and 10-year-old son I'd bring some home for dinner.

It took me about 15 minutes to get to my colleague's house, where I dropped



off the laptop case and got right back on the road. Then the snow started—and it was coming down fast. Within minutes I was in a whiteout. The storm was a “snownado,” or what the TV meteorologists call a Saskatchewan screamer, because it comes in fast and is so windy that it screams. It was terrifying!

The road soon went from paved to gravel, so I had to reduce my speed. I rolled down my window, thinking I could follow the edge of the road and keep to a straight line. But really, I hadn’t a clue where I was or even which side of the road I was on. At one point, I don’t know exactly when, I stopped because I was afraid of driving into a farmer’s field, the ditch or worse. I kept

the car running to keep warm and called 9-1-1. The dispatcher told me to sit tight and wait things out for the night—nobody was coming to get me until morning at the earliest.

Those seconds after the call were the worst of my life. Getting out to walk in a whiteout with zero visibility, high winds and a temperature that was hovering around -10 degrees C—when I didn't even know where I was—wasn't an option. But I worried other drivers wouldn't see me and would smash into the car. Or that the tailpipe would get clogged with snow and I'd die from carbon monoxide poisoning. Or that the storm would be longer than predicted and I'd be found too late. *Breathe,* I told myself. *Panicking won't help.*

WHAT WOULD MY BLACK SUV LOOK LIKE IN A WHITEOUT AT NIGHT? A SHADOW? OR WORSE, INVISIBLE?

And my kids! It was the first time they'd ever be spending a night without me at home. I called and told them what was happening, forcing myself to sound calm. I didn't tell them I was terrified. That I, a problem solver all my life, couldn't figure out what to do.

It was now about 6 p.m. and dark. What would my black SUV look like in a whiteout at night? Would it appear as a shadow? Or worse, would it be invisible? Suddenly a truck drove by, barely missing me. It was close. At first, I was scared. But then I thought, *salvation!* I put the car in drive and followed the truck, desperate, driving slowly with no idea where we were going. When it suddenly turned, I didn't know what to do.

"I'm going to the beach," the driver shouted through his open window, his words almost lost in the wind.

I knew the beach wasn't in the direction of my home. I had no idea where I was. So I stopped the car and texted my colleague whose laptop bag I had just returned. I joked about my good deed ending in disaster. But he had an idea. "Pin your location on Google Maps and send it to me," he said.

I did, and a few minutes later he texted me back a screenshot of the satellite view of where I was. We figured out that I was on a road called Bouvier Lane, in between two farms. It was now 6:30 p.m. I posted this new information to my Facebook community group, pleading for anyone who knew who lived on the farms to help me get rescued.

After that, all I could do was sit in the car and try to stay warm. I was so glad that I'd just filled it up. I'd done all I could, and no matter what happened, I had to be at peace with that. But even if someone did figure out where I was, would help be able to come through the swirling snow and shrieking wind?

Soon enough, though, people started chiming in on my post. They knew the family who lived there! I got a message

from someone who was going to put me in touch with them. At 8 p.m., my cellphone rang. It was the son of the farmer who owned the land beside the road I was stranded on. He told me that his dad was coming to get me!

Then, about 45 minutes later, I saw a tall figure in a yellow rain slicker striding toward me in the dark, carrying a flashlight. Oh my gosh, was I relieved to see him! It was André Bouvier, who'd walked half a kilometre through the blizzard to come get me, fighting the wind and snow each step of the way, shielding his eyes from the stinging snow with a mittened hand.

"Can you drive?" I asked, shakily, through the car window. "My nerves are shot." Despite his strong stride, now that he was close up, I realized he was an elderly man.

"No," he replied, his voice steady. "I want you follow me in your car. You'll be okay."

He turned around and started to trudge through the snow, sure of the direction. I drove slowly behind him, clutching the wheel, feeling my heart begin to beat more slowly. When we reached the house a few minutes later, I got out of the car and burst into tears, all my fears turning into relief and gratitude.

As his wife treated me to hot drinks and apple sauce, André, who I'd learn was 80 years old, said he'd noticed two other cars stranded, too, and he went back out into the storm to get them: a father and his two kids and a couple with their daughter. That's the kind of guy he is—a guy whose energy and outlook is so much younger than his actual age.

We all spent the night telling stories, the kids ate the pizza I'd bought, and we slept scattered around the house, on sofas and La-Z-Boy chairs. By 5:30 the next morning, André had cleared the snow from his driveway enough that we could all get out and drive home, which in my case ended up being only five minutes away. The storm turned me around so much, I didn't realize how close I was. Even so, I couldn't have gone any further without risking my life.

The experience gave me a new perspective, letting me approach challenges and surprises with a sense of calm. It reminded me to always reach out and help others—both friends and strangers. But best of all, it brought André into my life. We're still in touch, and I know we'll be friends forever.

André Bouvier was awarded a Queen Elizabeth II Platinum Jubilee Medal for his "outstanding service and citizenship" that night.

The Secret to Eternal Youth

We don't stop playing because we grow old; we grow old because we stop playing.

GEORGE BERNARD SHAW



The former "starchitect" who designed gleaming towers for Pakistan's corporate elite now rebuilds villages devastated by natural disasters

YASMEEN LARI'S CHANGE OF HEART

BY *Lisa Murphy*

AS YASMEEN LARI LOOKED out the car window across the Siran Valley in northeastern Pakistan, she grieved for what was no longer a lush vale with rolling green hills, trees and mountains. It was 2005, and the catastrophic earthquake that had killed as many as 79,000 people in Pakistan, India and Afghanistan one week earlier—on October 8—had reduced the valley to mud, rubble and flattened buildings.

The 65-year-old architect was there to help lead the reconstruction of settlements, but she had never done disaster work before. Lari was filled with anticipation after a two-hour flight from Karachi to Islamabad, Pakistan's capital, followed by this five-hour drive.

Darkness had fallen before her driver pulled into a dimly lit army camp where the military rescue operation was based; at 1,500 metres it was safer from aftershocks and rock slides than lower ground. When she stepped out of the car she was taken to the commanding officer, who talked to her about the villages

that needed immediate help. The enormity of the task ahead hit her full force.

Lari, who had become Pakistan's first female architect in 1964, was renowned for designing slick towers of glass and concrete in Karachi. But here, she'd be drawing plans for earthquake-resistant homes using stone and timber debris. Working from a rough cottage near the camp, she'd spend the next four months working with volunteer architects and engineers from Pakistan and abroad.

She would send her drawings with the volunteers, who walked through difficult terrain to reach mountain hamlets. There, they'd assist displaced families with sorting debris and building new and improved homes, even as temperatures plunged and snow began to fall.

"You can't imagine the desolation," Lari recalls of those early days in the mountains. Her team members, often the first people to arrive on the scene, were greeted with unexpected hospitality, given the circumstances.

On one visit, villagers pulled out their best salvaged chairs and table. "They had lost everything," she says. "But they put this damaged table in front of us and covered it with a beautiful embroidered cloth. And then they served us their World Food Programme food: biscuits, tea and eggs."

With each passing day, Lari was re-engineering her identity—from "starchitect" to humanitarian. The profession had been good to her, but she had become disillusioned with projects for corporate elites. And doing disaster-relief work felt deeply right. So she made it her new mission.

OVER THE DECADES, Yasmeen Lari has won many awards and much recognition as an architect, social justice advocate, environmentalist and feminist. While it may seem like an unlikely path for a girl who was born into a well-to-do family in 1941, she had an unconventional upbringing. Her father, Zafarul Ahsan, was a progressive civil service officer working on development projects in Lahore and elsewhere. Her mother, Nabiun Nisa, valued education and took pride in her role as a bureaucrat's wife who could ride a horse and entertain guests with equal aplomb.

Zafarul treated his three daughters no differently from their brother, and Nabiun encouraged them to do well in school. Lari became especially aware of politics and poverty after Partition in 1947, when Britain ended its rule of India and carved off a portion to create Pakistan.

Dividing the subcontinent into Hindu-majority India and Muslim-majority Pakistan resulted in the displacement of millions of people. Zafarul was made deputy commissioner of Lahore, which included overseeing refugee camps and creating residential areas. At home, he would talk about bereaved people, impoverished women selling sweets to the rich and the desperate need for housing.



ALL PHOTOS COURTESY OF HERITAGE FOUNDATION OF PAKISTAN





Left: Lari outside the women's centre she designed in Sindh province. It was built to withstand floods. Right: One of Lari's sustainable shelters.

"I understood for the first time that there can be adversity, and that people needed help," says Lari. "My sisters and I were the first post-colonial generation. Many women had played important roles in the struggle for independence. It followed that women should participate in nation-building."

Listening to her father talk about the housing crisis and need for architects made an impression on Lari. On a family visit to London when she was 15, she applied to the school of architecture at Oxford Brookes University. She laughs as she recalls her boldness. "I was too young, and I didn't have a portfolio of sketches or drawings, so they told me to learn to draw and then come back."

After two years of daytime and evening classes, Lari was admitted to the architecture program as one of only five women in a class of more than 30.

Protected by her family and her husband, Suhail Zaheer Lari (who passed away in 2020), Yasmeen Lari experienced little sexism or prejudice in England. Even Karachi, where she started working after returning to Pakistan in 1964, was progressive. Building-site contractors might test her mettle by making her climb wobbly ladders in her sari, but her married status and privileged background kept her mostly insulated from discrimination.

Lari gained inspiration by exploring the historic areas of Pakistan. In Kashmir and Sindh she admired the flood-resistant heritage buildings made with local materials to withstand extreme weather. And she loved the winding streets and beautiful terraces in Lahore and Multan. As architect for a Lahore social housing project in 1973, Lari listened to the local women and ensured



that there were safe, open spaces to raise children and chickens alike.

Yet soon she heard the siren call of commercial projects—with their creative freedom, large budgets and luxurious materials. From 1980 to 2000, as her buildings rose across Karachi, including the Taj Mahal Hotel, the Finance and Trade Centre, the Pakistan State Oil House and the ABN AMRO Bank, Lari's renown grew. She held senior positions in national and international architectural groups, was a member of governmental advisory councils and was a keynote speaker at conferences. "It was a very heady feeling," she says.

Despite her success, she found ways to stay grounded. Lari and her husband, a historian, created the nonprofit Heritage Foundation of Pakistan to celebrate and conserve the country's historic architecture, art and culture. Lari wrote papers and books on these themes and helped save several prominent buildings.

But it wasn't enough to offset her growing discomfort with corporate projects. In 2000, the thrill of winning big projects was gone, and Lari retired.

"I realized I was just working with rich people," she says. She could no longer justify fashioning buildings out of unsustainable materials like polished granite and mirrored glass when corruption was rising and millions lived in poverty, with limited access to housing, sanitation and water.

"Perhaps with my present work, I am atoning," says Lari.

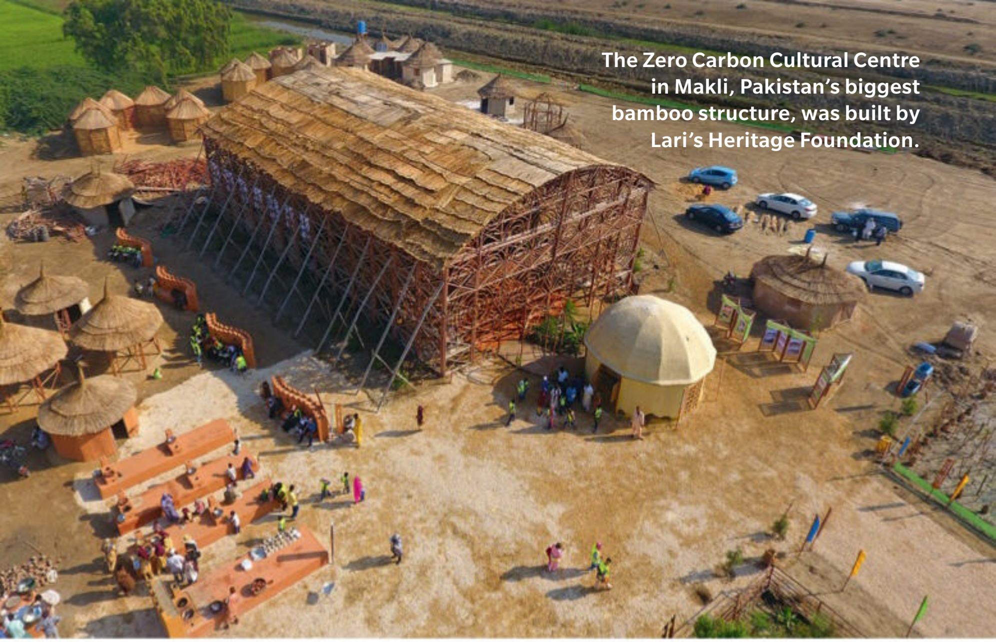
IN 2013, LARI was giving a tour of a village in the southern province of Sindh that had been rebuilt after monsoon floods so destructive they impacted some 20 million Pakistanis. In a crisp white kameez and printed headscarf that fluttered in the breeze, she watched as villagers showed off the buildings she had designed. "Our old buildings used to leak when it rained, but these stay dry inside," one villager told Lari.

The new bamboo structures are covered in a mix of sand and lime called limecrete, which holds up well in Pakistan's climate. And women can beautify their new homes by painting designs on them, an aspect Lari loves.

Pakistan's location and melting glaciers place it within the top 10 countries most impacted by climate change over the past two decades, even though the country itself emits less than one percent of global greenhouse gases. Ironically, rebuilding projects funded by government and non-governmental organizations tend to use concrete, burnt brick, metal sheets and other expensive, non-local building supplies.

Lari points out that the creation and transport of these materials contributes significantly to greenhouse gas emissions, with concrete being one of the worst offenders. Furthermore, they don't perform well in severe weather.

In contrast, Lari's shelters, inspired by traditional designs and made with



The Zero Carbon Cultural Centre in Makli, Pakistan's biggest bamboo structure, was built by Lari's Heritage Foundation.

sustainable materials such as reed matting, bamboo, mud and lime that are sourced locally first, can better withstand disasters. Bamboo homes on stilts allow water to flow through, while cross-bracing provides strength and flexibility during earthquakes. Lari's insistence on low-cost, zero-waste and zero-carbon buildings reflects her commitment to the planet.

While her passion for sustainability has grown over the years, her faith in traditional relief funding and charity models has withered. Over two decades she has learned that the approach typically used by government and nongovernmental organizations alike doesn't work well. Locals are often treated like helpless victims, and megaprojects are developed using outside labour. Also, funds are often siphoned away via administrative fees.

"I have seen too much mismanagement when intermediaries are involved," says Lari, who favours working at the community level. "These are the people who need me."

Lari calls this local, cost-effective, participatory and zero-carbon approach "barefoot social architecture," which is helping to create an ecosystem of "barefoot entrepreneurs." For example, she has created a program that teaches impoverished people in Sindh province to construct buildings and to create and sell mud bricks, bamboo panels, terracotta tiles and other building materials.

Anyone can learn by watching DIY videos on Lari's Zero Carbon Channel on YouTube. Also, workshops led by local experts and artisans are held at a training centre in Pono Markaz and at





Left: Building a Pakistan Chulah (smokeless cookstove). Right: The final result.

the beautiful, airy Zero Carbon Cultural Centre in Makli. Built by locals and Lari's Heritage Foundation of Pakistan, the latter is the biggest bamboo structure in the country.

The town of Makli is located about 100 kilometres east of Karachi. Almost half the people in the region live in poverty, and many beg at the nearby Makli Necropolis, a UNESCO World Heritage Site with its nearly half a million tombs and graves. A day's worth of alms might be 100 Pakistani rupees—equivalent to 50 cents and not enough to feed a family. When locals learn to create and sell tiles, organic soap and other products at the Zero Carbon Cultural Centre, however, they make at least four times that much. Skilled workers share their knowledge, creating more prosperity.

Women and youth gather at the centre to socialize and learn. "The women are uppermost in my mind," says Lari. "They are the ones who really suffer."

This feminist inspiration has fuelled many of Lari's designs, which now include household innovations. For instance, more than 80,000 of her lime-crete and smokeless cookstoves, called Pakistan Chulahs, have been built and decorated by villagers.

The device, which won a UN World Habitat Prize in 2018, costs about $10 to make and is fuelled with agricultural waste. The stoves stand higher than flood levels, making them safer than smoky, open cooking fires on the ground; they literally and figuratively lift women up.

Another one of Lari's designs that benefits both women and the environment is a composting private eco-toilet shelter. About 10 percent of Pakistanis lack a toilet or latrine and must seek privacy outside, either far from their residence or at night. The eco-toilet



provides better sanitation and hygiene, and more dignity.

Lari's Holistic Villages project builds on all these advances to help villages become self-sufficient. At a cost of about $200 per household, villagers can build disaster-resilient bamboo houses, Chulah stoves and shared eco-toilets. They have access to solar-powered lights, hand-powered water pumps, instructions and assistance to produce their own food, and training to create income-generating products or businesses.

Lari says about 60,000 zero-carbon holistic houses have been built since 2010. Next, she wants to scale up—and rehabilitate one million households.

IN 2022, FLOODS struck again, as glacial meltwater and epic monsoon rains covered one-third of Pakistan, destroying crops, homes and villages. They displaced about 33 million people, many of them already below the poverty line. Lari and the Heritage Foundation organized artisans to create and supply another of her innovations: prefabricated bamboo walls for 3.5-by-3.5-metre quick-assembly shelters.

Lari now travels regularly from her base in Karachi to Makli, to events around the globe and to the United Kingdom, where she holds a visiting professorship at Cambridge University's department of architecture. For the Islamic Arts Biennale in Jeddah, Saudi Arabia, earlier this year she created three stunning bamboo mosques that can be dismantled and reassembled. In 2020 she won the Jane Drew prize for raising the profile of women architects and, in 2023, the coveted Royal Institute of British Architects (RIBA) Gold Medal. Even King Charles is a fan; one of her shelters can be found on his Highgrove estate.

Lari insists that anyone who wants to help the impoverished and flood-affected in Pakistan should go directly to the people. She recommends connecting with village leaders to help fund things like water pumps, solar panels and school computers. (The Heritage Foundation of Pakistan offers information about villages in need and how to direct donations.)

"It's no longer a matter of just giving money and cleaning your conscience—you need to create connections," says Lari. "We need to believe in people's capacity to bring about change. I treat displaced people as partners, not victims. They know what to do."

At age 83, Yasmeen Lari is still fizzing with ideas about zero-carbon designs, flood mitigation, skills building and self-sustaining villages. As she said when she accepted the RIBA medal, the honour "has strengthened my mission."

Many young architects have told her that they find her work inspiring, which gratifies her. "Architects can no longer work for just the one percent," she says. "That doesn't allow them to serve humanity as much as they could." R

THE NATIVE LANGUAGE AND CULTURE OF IRELAND ARE ALIVE AND WELL IN THE COUNTRY'S GAELTACHT REGIONS



The Irish Gaelic language is thriving on the Dingle Peninsula.



IRISH MELODY

BY *J.R. Patterson* FROM *HEMISPHERES* FOR UNITED AIRLINES

LANGUAGE IS MUSIC.

Each tongue has its particular cadence, rhythm and tone, and finds a natural partner in one musical form or another. German is a march. Italian carries the trills of baroque chamber music. The Irish language, when I first overhear it in a pub in western Ireland, reaches my ears like an old hymnal, its chordal tang ancient and elegiac.

The men upon whom I'm eavesdropping are bent forward, as though discussing mortality—until they burst out laughing and drain their pints. It leaves me feeling, in the words of Irish writer Maurice O'Sullivan, "like a dog listening to music."

I see this as *tús maith*—a good beginning, a chance to see a familiar place anew. Ireland has become part of the global community, but the Gaeltacht regions, or An Ghaeltacht, are the root from which the shamrock has bloomed; deeper, darker and full of *ortha an dul amú*—the charm of concealment.

My ancestors were forced from the country by famine and land reforms during the 19th century, when the Gaeilge language (also known as Irish Gaelic) was at its nadir. The lingual tie to their homeland was severed, but in Ireland a steadfast few still hold their end of the link. Wanting to know what I might glean from hearing that ancestral sound, I've come to the shredded western coast, from Dingle to Connemara to Donegal, where one can still catch those hymns in the air.

It's no coincidence that the coast is where the Irish language retains its strongest hold. While English became dominant among both emigrants to the New World and the Irish who lived closer to Dublin, in the western part of the country the native language remained the connection to Gaelic culture.

Today, a coordinated effort among governments, schools, historians and enthusiasts safeguards these social and linguistic traditions. While almost two million Irish now claim to speak some aspect of the language, only about 70,000 speak it daily outside the education system. The majority are found in the counties of Galway, Monaghan, Donegal and Kerry, where I start my journey.

MY FIRST STOP IS the Dingle peninsula, a finger of land sticking out into the Atlantic. The town of Dingle was once a parochial fishing village, its crooked lanes stacked with lobster pots and gillnets. It has been given a wash and a touch-up of late; between the bright facades of sweater shops and art galleries hang gilded signs advertising the catch of the day with colcannon and curry chips. "We're the last of the Mohicans out here," a man tells me in the Dingle Pub, the cream of his Guinness spilling over the lip of the glass.

There's a feeling of the end of things, but also one of hope: the belief that

(PREVIOUS SPREAD) MARK DE JONG/UNSPLASH.COM

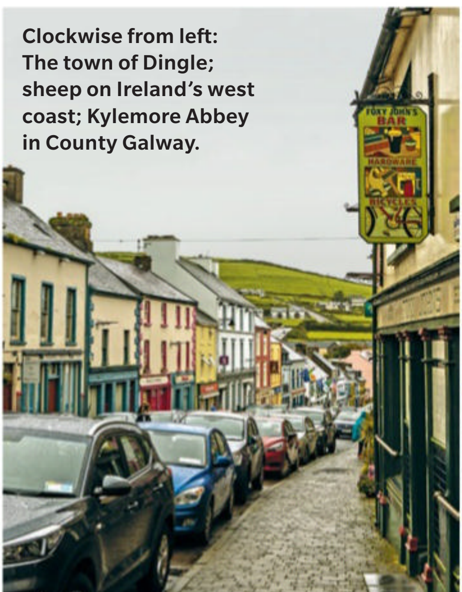
newfound enthusiasm for the language—and quality restaurants, bookshops and festivals—will keep the area alive. On this early autumn day, the town bustles with walkers and window shoppers who move to the drone of an Irish dirge that streams from the pub until well into the night.

The next morning, I awake in my room at An Capall Dubh (The Black Horse), a guesthouse in Dingle. For breakfast, owner Helena Curran serves me eggs laid by her own chickens, cursing the *madra rua* (red fox) that stole away with one of the flock in the night. Curran was raised speaking Irish, and her use of Gaeilge is intrinsic to her stern charisma. "The language is alive here," she says.

She has certainly made it a part of life at her inn. Moving briskly between the tables, she pours coffee and serves plates while giving guests tumbling language lessons. I ask what phrase will best serve me during my time in Ireland. "All you'll need for now," she says, "is *míle buíochas*." A thousand thanks.

When I tell Curran of my plans to hike out to Dún Chaoin, the westernmost point of the peninsula, she gives me a *gáire glic*, a sly smile. "The whales are in, so keep a good lookout," she says. "The water's like a sheet of glass today."

It is distant and beautiful. Reaches of azure stripped with white extend in a flush expanse toward the green rise of the Blasket Islands and, beyond, the spectral form of the Skellig Islands. Now abandoned, the Blaskets were once home to a thriving literary community; the Irish-language canon was bolstered by islanders Tomás Ó Criomhthain, Maurice O'Sullivan and Peig Sayers, whose autobiography, *Peig*, was once the bane of Irish schoolchildren.



Clockwise from left: The town of Dingle; sheep on Ireland's west coast; Kylemore Abbey in County Galway.





(CLOCKWISE FROM LEFT) MARK DE JONG/UNSPLASH.COM; MEGAN JOHNSTON/UNSPLASH.COM; JAMIESON GORDON/UNSPLASH.COM

After a pint in Dún Chaoin, I take the Mám Clasach Road to the village of Baile an Fheirtéaraigh, the roadside hedged with fuchsia, loosestrife and quaking-grass with trilobite-like petals shaking in the wind. The sloping hills are like the bumps of a rumpled bed, the fields laid down like the patchwork of an uneven quilt.

Walking through the countryside gives good perspective, but the weather makes it impractical. The blue skies are often overtaken by sudden squalls, the wind bringing blocks of rain that flatten the land and leave me cold and drenched. Because public transport in rural Ireland moves at a pre-industrial pace, I switch to a car and drive north.

The Gaeltachts are vague geographical areas, generally delineated by where Irish remains the predominant language. They are deeply rural, with advertisements for horse cutting and tractor repair tacked onto telephone poles. For years, their remoteness meant they leaked muscle and brain power, with youth leaving for better opportunities in Dublin or overseas. Today, though, the Gaeltachts are using their language as a strength, to sustain a resurgence that prior generations would have found unthinkable.

On the seaside promenade in Galway city, I stop to chat with a man I hear speaking Irish into his cellphone. "Twenty years ago, I would've had to emigrate," he says. "Now, there's work here. People are building homes, raising their children and sending them to Irish schools." He pauses and smiles. "It's not contrived, if you catch my meaning. The language, it's not a conscious thing. It's just who we are."

There is a feeling among the people who speak Irish that the language is something priceless, like a precious stone kept in the pocket. It's wonderfully exact. There is a word for the roof of a dog's mouth (*carball*) and the clacking of pebbles moved by lapping seawater (*súitú*). *Muirleadh* is the act of chewing up small crabs and spitting them into the sea for bait.

It also imparts the true character of the landscape. During the 19th century, when Irish was systematically replaced with English, the knowledge and legends contained within place names became confused. There's no circular rock at County Galway's Roundstone village, but there are seals, as conveyed by the original name, Cloch



Wool-maker Carina Coyne has a strong love for her country.

COURTESY OF CARINA COYNE

na Rón, or "Rock of the Seals." Nearby An Cheathrú Rua—"The Red Quarter" for the local population—was anglicized into Carraroe, a nonsense word.

AFTER A NIGHT IN THE CITY of Galway, I drive west into Connemara, the largest of the Gaeltacht regions. At the Ionad Cultúrtha an Phiarsaigh cultural centre in Ros Muc ("Peninsula of Rounded Hills"), my guide, Daíre Óh Ainmhire, shows me a map made by Tim Robinson, an English cartographer who travelled to western Ireland in the 1970s and '80s to document the Irish names of places. "Here's the real Ireland," he says.

The communities where Irish is still strong, such as Leitir Mealláin and Carna, largely depend on fishing, but stocks have declined. The solution has been technology: The internet, far from disrupting life, has allowed people who left to find work in the city to return. Coworking spaces known as "gteic digital hubs" have sprung up in small towns around the Gaeltacht. At the gteic in Carna, Mairín Ní Choisdealbha-Seoige, a local development officer, tells me that "'blow-backs'—people returning to live in the Gaeltacht—have become as common as 'blow-ins,' people moving here for the first time."

History weighs heavily on the Gaeltacht, and I visit the Emigrants Commemorative Centre in Carna to explore my own. The centre gives descendants of Irish emigrants a place to reconnect with ancestors through thousands of documents, records and photographs.

Over ham-and-salad sandwiches in the cafeteria, the likes of which I haven't tasted since my grandmother's kitchen, I sit with a group and discuss Ireland's connection with America—the packages of clothes and money that were sent east from those resettled relatives, the slivers of peat that were sent west like pieces of totemic incense.

THE GAELIC-LANGUAGE STUDENTS, WITH THEIR RISING ENROLMENT, PROVE THAT IRISH HAS A FUTURE.

At some point, I realize those around me are speaking English for my benefit. Language can be a concealer of secrets, but it's more often used to include. Whenever I let my attention waver, they slip in a phrase or two in Irish, careful not to exclude me but finding comfort in their cradle-tongue.

The comfort of custom is an inherent part of maintaining traditions. The next day, driving through the low hills of north County Galway, I turn at a sign for Joyce Country Wool. Here, at a small holding on the fringe of Loch Na Fooey, Carina Coyne teaches visitors how to process wool the traditional way, from the raw fleece of her sheep.

"My ancestors lived on eggs and socks, just over there," she says, pointing out the window to a small lime-mortar



Road signs on Ireland's west coast are in both Irish Gaelic and English.

cottage. Beyond that, a flock of sheep moves across the hillside, elongated and squeezed by border collies.

As with most Irish speakers I meet, Coyne has strong *tírghrá*, or love for her country. She cards and spins fleece as her forebears did and walks the hills of Connemara to collect ingredients with which to dye her handspun wool. Strung around her shop are skeins tinted red with meadowsweet, ochre with onion skins, yellow with gorse, green with nettle. "Nothing bright," Coyne says, handing me a burly sweater. "Put this on, and you melt into the land."

Northern Connemara presents landscapes grander than I thought Ireland could hold. Dry-stone walls snake up hillsides like geoglyphs waiting to be translated. The Twelve Bens and Maumturks ranges rise from green leas to rocky tops, the valleys between strung with lakes and ponds. Country manors such as Screebe House, Ballynahinch Castle and Lough Inagh Lodge maintain airs of antiquated grandeur, with hunting dogs snoring on the carpets and grand paintings hung over soot-stained hearths.

At dusk, I stop at the Inagh Valley Lodge. Lit by the falling sun, the slopes of Binn Bhriocáin blush like a golden pyramid. That night, over my duck in port and plum sauce, I read Manchán Magan's *Thirty-Two Words for Field*. From the next table, a man leans over and asks me to explain my *breacadh*, my scribbling notes. He doesn't quite ask it that way, though, as he's lost his Irish. "It's not quite Chinese," he says, "but I'm terrible with language."

Growing up in Dublin, he'd maintained a certain level of schoolboy Irish, but it was like a rusty bicycle. "I can remember how to ride, but it's better I don't get on the thing." Being in the Gaeltacht fills him with *díláthair*, the feeling of something missing. "Hearing it spoken so beautifully makes me wish I could."

Many of those I meet who have lost the language confide such laments. Educational facilities are trying to curb that loss. Students from across the country can study in the Gaeltacht at schools such as Carna's Coláiste Sheosaimh,

PIERE BONBON/ALAMY STOCK PHOTO

where they can immerse themselves in the language. Along with a youthful vigour, the students, with their rising enrolment, prove that Irish has a future.

IN DONEGAL, ONE OF THE farthest Gaeltachts from Dublin, many of the bilingual road signs have the English place names struck out with red paint. At An Bun Beag, I meet up with friends, and together we drive north into a sylvan landscape touched with clouds. The hillsides are scarred with peat cuttings, the white bags of earthen bricks like flocks of swans.

Here and there, ruins of stone houses poke through the moss and heather. These carcasses of history heighten the silence, and we go quiet so that we might not break the hallowed calm. As Seamus Heaney wrote, “When you have nothing more to say, just drive/For a day all round the peninsula.”

That is just what we do. To Dún Fionnachaidh, where we tip freshly shucked oysters to our lips, filling our mouths with smoky brine. To the promontory of Horn Head, where the deceptively smooth land rises to meet the sea with sheer cliffs. And to Lough Beagh, where the bright sunshine makes sparkling tinsel of the slips of water that trickle down the granite slopes of the Glendowan Mountains.

That night at the Teach Hiúdaí Beag pub, we listen to the sound of Irish rising from the tables. As the bartender, Magnus, pulls me a pint, he speaks about his childhood in the village. He is only in his early 20s, but Irish is his first language. I tell him I’ve heard the concern across Ireland that children raised primarily in Irish have trouble adapting to English, that it slows their education and cognition. Magnus scoffs. “It was no bother at all,” he says. “I was like a sponge.”

Around one table, we sense the growing promise of music. First, two young boys with a guitar and an accordion arrive. Then two women draw out their flutes. There’s a man with a drum, and a girl appears with a fiddle. Soon, there are a baker’s dozen of musicians.

Each tune begins tentatively, a fiddler quietly drawing her bow until others join in turn. The songs swell, the players urging each other on, in competition with the rowdy crowd. Then, a lone woman’s voice breaks through the cacophony.

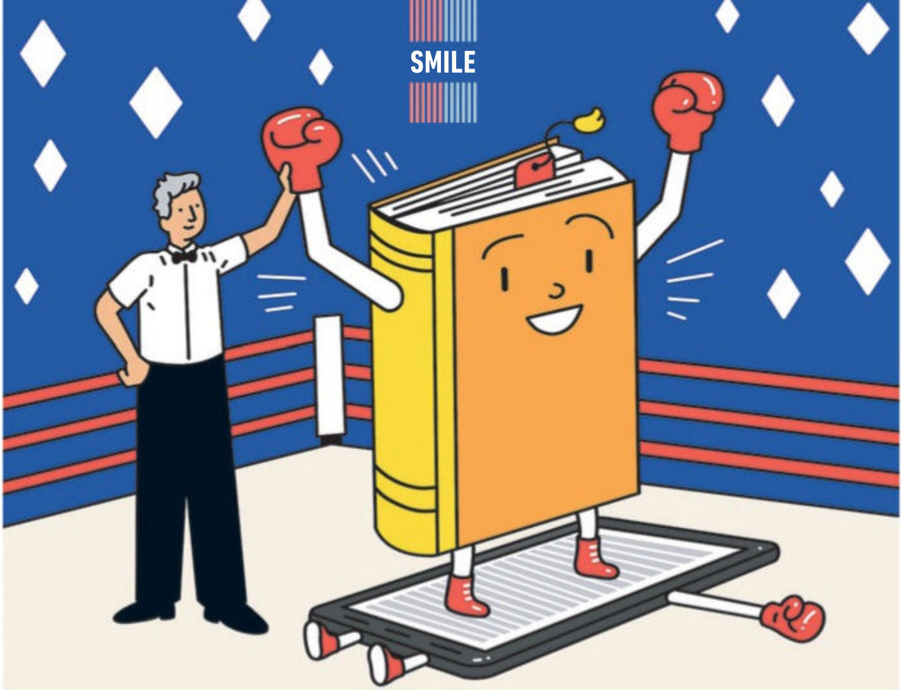
Her words are strange and mournful. The lamenting tune carried by her flat alto spreads through the room, which has hushed to listen to this rare and beautiful hymn.

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Natural Intelligence

The real problem is not whether machines think but whether men do.

B.F. SKINNER



THE TRIUMPH OF THE BOOK

BY *Richard Glover*

THE PRINTED BOOK is back. Recent studies have shown that students retain more information when they read a hard-copy book compared to reading on a digital device.

One school near where I live responded to these findings by ditching its e-readers. The students found, according to a teacher, that "the ease of navigation" was superior when using a traditional book.

I love the way we now judge printed books using the language of the digital world. E-books may come with a "suite of navigational tools," but it turns out that the best navigational devices are your forefinger and thumb. You can use them to flip the pages forward and backward. To think, all this time, those devices have just been just sitting there, dangling at the end of your arm.

Fans of digital books may point out that e-readers have a handy "search" tool. Old-fashioned books also have a search function, in which you turn back to the opening chapter to remind yourself of the hero's surname. They

ILLUSTRATION BY *Sam Island*

even have a "bookmark system," which uses a device called a "bookmark."

Can a traditional book offer all the features of an e-book? Alas, no. It lacks a "progress bar" indicating what percentage of the book has been read. Luckily, a "hack" is available: Turn your book so that it can be viewed from the side or top. It will naturally form two halves joined in the middle ("the spine"). If the left-hand chunk is thicker than the right-hand one, you are more than halfway through.

ANY PROPERLY THUMBED BOOK WILL ALWAYS FALL OPEN AT THE SEXIEST SCENE.

Fans of the e-book point out that digital text is easy to annotate. Some devices even feature a little image of a pencil to guide the reader through the process. Traditional-book users have a similar system called a "pencil." With it, favoured passages can be underlined and, if it's a history book, pretentious comments can be written in the margin, such as "Not so, according to *The Decline and Fall of the Roman Empire*."

Thus annotated, such books can be left around for others to peruse, convincing family members, or prospective lovers, of your intellectual perspicacity.

Admittedly, e-books are lighter than paper volumes, but one must question whether this is really an advantage. In secondary school my physique was transformed by the daily need to carry science textbooks. For me and my fellow students, placing these weighty tomes in our backpacks would draw our shoulders back and our chests forward in a way that turned the school into the equivalent of a military parade ground.

The printed book, of course, has other advantages. A full bookshelf is at once a sound baffle and a store of knowledge. And any properly thumbed book will always fall open at the sexiest scene.

Tidying guru Marie Kondo has said that she keeps about 30 books at any one time. Those who follow Kondo's example may have a less cluttered home, but a large, well-stocked bookshelf is more meaningful. It's a map of your life as a reader: the passions that passed and those that endured. There are books that introduced you to other books, like friends at a party, and books that nursed you through difficult times.

Also, the smell of old books in a second-hand bookshop is instantly evocative. Yes, it's a mix of mould and old paper, but to me it represents possibility. Spend an hour browsing, and you'll be sure to stumble across an out-of-print book you thought you'd never find.

Educational fads come and go, so maybe the shift back to traditional books won't last. But for the moment, I find myself standing at attention, flexing my textbook-built shoulders and saluting their glorious return. R

Dementia Breakthroughs Offer New Hope

After decades of disappointments, new treatments and tests are finally here

BY *Vanessa Milne*

ILLUSTRATIONS BY *Mary Haasdyk Vooys*



Eight years ago,

neurologist Dan Gibbs was sitting in a room with two dozen doctors and researchers. He was getting ready to look at brain scans—not a patient's, but his own. They would definitively answer a question he had had for years: What was wrong with him?

It started when he was 55 and working as a neurologist in Portland, Oregon. He noticed he couldn't smell certain things, like flowers. Then he began to smell things that weren't there, like baking bread, perfume or citrus. He randomly got a clue as to what might be the cause after doing an at-home DNA test to find out more about his family tree. The results showed he had two copies of a gene, APOE4, that increases the risk of developing Alzheimer's. He was shocked: Before his genetic test, it had never occurred to him that he might get the disease.

At the time, he did not have memory symptoms, but over the next few years, he noticed some mild memory problems, like forgetting his colleagues' names and having difficulty memorizing his new office phone number. That, combined with his background as a researcher, led him to participate in a study at the University of California, San Francisco, that was focused on diagnosing Alzheimer's.

And now the results were in.

The researchers pulled up the pictures and showed him beta-amyloid plaques in different parts of his brain, including his prefrontal cortex and the olfactory area, which controls smell. It was a sign of early-stage Alzheimer's. Surprisingly, Gibbs was happy: "When they showed me the scans, it was a relief to have a firm diagnosis," he says.

WHAT IS DEMENTIA?

Dementia is an umbrella term for a group of symptoms contributing to a decline in memory, thinking, reasoning and social abilities. It's progressive, and some people with dementia will need 24-hour care at the end of their lives.

Fifty-five million people around the world have dementia, including 5.8 million in the United States and almost 600,000 in Canada. While only one percent of those aged 65 to 69 have it, the risk of a dementia diagnosis doubles every five years between the ages of 65 and 84. One in four people over age 85 have dementia.

But breakthroughs in treatment and testing this year have given new hope

to researchers like Dr. Don Weaver, director and senior scientist at the Krembil Research Institute at the University Health Network in Toronto.

"There's genuine room for optimism," he says. "The research is moving at a faster pace than ever before." That's come to fruition with new treatments, plus groundbreaking tests that are in the pipeline.

There are about a dozen different causes of dementia. The most common is Alzheimer's disease, which accounts for 60 to 70 percent of dementia cases. While the cause of Alzheimer's is not yet fully understood, researchers have been focusing on the malfunctioning of two specific brain proteins.

The first, beta-amyloid proteins, are a normal part of the central nervous system, and are usually cleared out of the brain. In a brain with Alzheimer's, however, these proteins are not properly cleared away. The protein clumps together in between neurons, creating deposits called amyloid plaques, which disrupt cell function.

The second type, tau proteins, are primarily found inside neurons. In people with Alzheimer's, this protein, which normally assists in the transportation of nutrients throughout the brain, accumulates and becomes "tangled" inside the neuron. The buildup of these two proteins impacts the capacity of brain cells to communicate. Eventually they kill the cells, affecting a person's ability to think and remember.

Other types of dementia include Lewy body dementia, in which protein deposits called Lewy bodies build up in the brain, affecting thinking, memory and movement; vascular dementia, which can happen after a stroke or blood vessel damage reduces the flow of blood and oxygen to the brain; and frontotemporal dementia, when the frontal and temporal lobes of the brain shrink. The latter can happen to people as young as 40; it was in the spotlight earlier this year after actor Bruce Willis was diagnosed with it at age 67.

NEW DRUGS FOR ALZHEIMER'S

For decades, the treatment of dementia has seemed frustratingly dormant. Two classes of drugs that were introduced three decades ago improve symptoms: Cholinesterase inhibitors boost acetylcholine, a chemical the brain needs for



alertness, memory and judgment; and memantine regulates glutamate, a chemical messenger needed for learning and memory. But neither limits the disease's progress. Launched two years ago, the drug Aducanumab can reduce buildup of amyloid plaques in the brains of Alzheimer's patients, but has not been proven to slow cognitive decline.

Now, finally, years of research progress is bearing new fruit, and we're on the brink of major advances in treatment and prevention.

"The new drugs are big, exciting breakthroughs," says Gill Livingston, a professor of psychiatry of older people at University College London in the United Kingdom and lead of the *Lancet* standing committee on dementia prevention, intervention and care. She adds, however, that it's still early days and there are some big hurdles to clear.

In January this year, the U.S. Food and Drug Administration approved the first drug that slows the progress of Alzheimer's rather than just treating the symptoms. (The FDA is often the first to approve drugs, and they then become available in other countries such as the U.K. and Canada in the years after.)

In clinical trials, people with Alzheimer's who took the drug lecanemab (Leqembi) for 18 months showed their rate of memory and cognition decline was 27 percent less than in those who took a placebo. But it's not clear what the decline translates to in the real world.

As Dr. Roger Wong, clinical professor of geriatric medicine at the University of British Columbia in Vancouver, explains, "We need to know what this means to a person living with dementia. An improvement in functionality is what we're really looking for."

In addition, there are downsides to the new drug, which is given by IV. It's expensive, and can have serious side effects including bleeding in the brain.

A second drug, donanemab, not yet approved by the FDA, has also shown promise in clinical trials. It slows the rate of cognitive decline from Alzheimer's by about one third. But, like lecanemab, it can have serious side effects.

"So we're not quite there," says Livingston. "But it's fantastic that we're *beginning* to be there."

BIG LEAPS FORWARD IN PREVENTION

In the past few years, our knowledge about the prevention of dementia has increased dramatically, and many issues that cause dementia are actually now treatable. "We have finally sorted out what the risk factors are, and we are paying attention to them," says Weaver of the Krembil Research Institute in Toronto.

According to a 2020 *Lancet* report led by Livingston, 40 percent of dementia cases could be avoided. The number-one factor was hearing loss, which can affect your ability to converse with others, leading to isolation. "That really surprised us," says Livingston. "And it's a reversible risk, because you can



change it by simply using hearing aids."

Spending time socializing was another important lifestyle factor. "Talking to other people stimulates your brain and gets it working because you have to engage, you have to think," Livingston explains.

Getting 150 minutes of exercise a week can keep your heart in good shape, which translates into a healthier brain. Having a stimulating job also helps, as does getting more education earlier in life—it boosts what's known as your cognitive reserve, so even if you do suffer from a loss of cognitive power, you have some to spare. Treating depression is also important.

And then there are things to avoid: Smoking and air pollution raise the risk. Plus, it's now known that traumatic brain injury also raises the risk, as do heavy drinking, having high blood pressure or diabetes, and being obese.

"We now know that for many people, dementia is not inevitable," says Livingston.

BLOOD TESTS FOR MORE ACCURATE DIAGNOSIS

Just as important as new medications are breakthroughs in diagnosis. Multiple blood tests for Alzheimer's, which have been used widely in clinical trials, are expected to be available to the public before the end of 2023, according to Gil Rabinovici, professor of neurology and radiology and director of the University of California, San Francisco Alzheimer's disease research centre.

"I think the blood tests and new treatments that are coming are going to really transform how we practise and how we care for people with memory loss," says Rabinovici.

Currently, Alzheimer's is diagnosed by doctors through a combination of means, including reviewing symptoms and family medical history, physical exams and brain imaging. Doctors will also administer cognitive tests, such as asking people to remember a list of words, draw a clock or name as many animals as they can.

What's missing from this evaluation is direct and conclusive biological evidence of Alzheimer's—meaning the diagnosis relies heavily on the doctor's expertise, says Rabinovici. Weaver agrees. "It's not like rheumatoid arthritis, for which we can do a blood test, or pneumonia where you can do an X-ray and go, 'Yep, you've got it.'"

That's important, because according to a 2012 study of people with mild to moderate dementia, about 30 percent of people clinically diagnosed with Alzheimer's were discovered via autopsy to have not actually had it. For those with only mild cognitive impairment, which is harder to diagnose, accuracy would be even lower, says Rabinovici.

In some cases, that would mean that instead of having Alzheimer's disease, people might have vascular or Lewy body dementia. However, for others, their symptoms are caused by something reversible, such as sleep disorders like sleep apnea, mood disorders such as depression, or hormonal changes. Medications including those used to treat insomnia, incontinence and allergies can negatively affect cognitive function, especially in older adults.

With new Alzheimer's drugs becoming available, in the U.S. for now, it's even more important that doctors have the right diagnosis before they prescribe them. An accurate diagnosis allows people to make crucial decisions such as whether to quit their jobs or move into assisted living, and for their families to plan for caregiving support.

PLAQUES START DEVELOPING IN THE BRAIN ABOUT 20 YEARS BEFORE SYMPTOMS START.

Michelle Mielke, chair of the department of epidemiology and prevention at Wake Forest University School of Medicine in Winston-Salem, North Carolina, says an earlier and more accurate diagnosis, which a blood test may provide, could transform health care in the future.

Plaques start developing in the brain about 20 years before symptoms begin, she explains, and not everyone with plaques will develop cognitive impairment. She says that years from now, "just like we screen people for their cholesterol because we know it is a risk

factor for heart attack and stroke, we might be able to screen people by a certain age for amyloid and tau brain proteins. And if they are elevated, we could try a treatment plan of medications that will delay or prevent that person from ever developing symptoms."

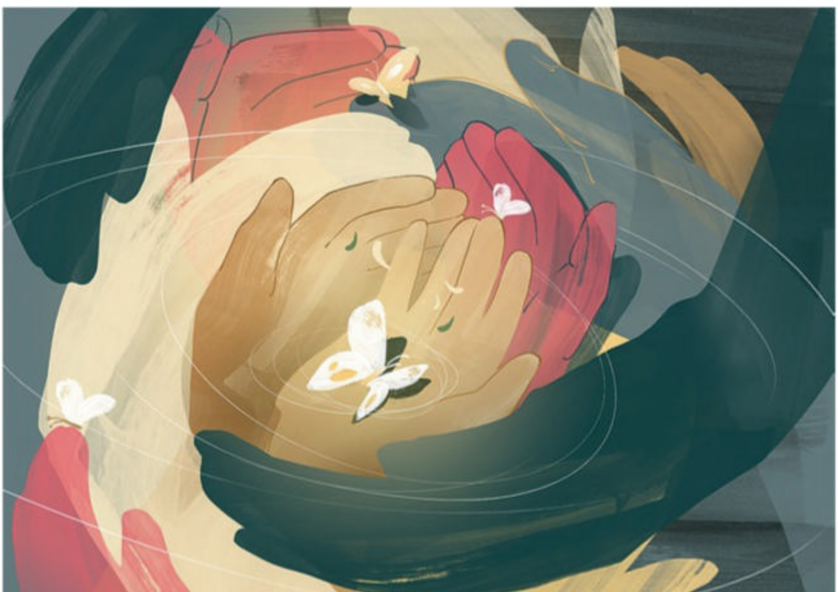
PUTTING MORE FOCUS ON CAREGIVERS

Caring for a family member with dementia can be incredibly stressful, and for a long time, caregivers' needs have been overlooked. Now their struggles are better known, thanks to research findings. A review published in *Dialogues in Clinical Neuroscience* in 2022 found that in developed countries, up to 85 percent of caregivers developed depression, and up to 45 percent developed anxiety.

The good news, however, is that community support is growing. Initiatives include "memory cafes," where caregivers can go with their loved one who has dementia to have a coffee, share in activities, find community—and just feel normal for a while. There are more than 1,200 memory cafes around the world, with some 40 in Canada, 700 in the U.S., 90 in the U.K. and countless others across Europe. (Your local Alzheimer's organization can help you find one near you.)

Other public places, such as museums, are also getting on board, running "dementia-friendly days" to offer a supportive environment for people with cognitive issues and their caregivers. And Alzheimer's organizations in many countries have programs to support dementia-friendly communities.

For example, Phoenix, Arizona, is one of the largest of dozens of American



cities that have become "dementia friendly" under the Dementia Friendly America initiative. The city has added memory cafes, and runs Dementia Friends presentations that educate people about the condition and how to help those who have it. Phoenix's airport offers green cactus-printed lanyards to people with dementia or other invisible disabilities, which indicate to staffers that they may need help.

Similarly, in the U.K. hundreds of communities now offer training about dementia to municipal staff, put clear signage at eye level and mark glass doors so they're more visible. In one town, Aberfeldy, Scotland, the local movie theatre is promoting films that are suitable for someone with dementia. Soccer's governing body has backed the Alzheimer's Society's new Dementia Friendly Sports Clubs and Venues guide; Wembley in London will become the U.K.'s first dementia-friendly national stadium. The goal is to improve the match-day experience for people living with dementia, since they can find sporting venues disorienting and overwhelming.

Paula Spencer Scott, the U.S.-based author of *Surviving Alzheimer's,* knows firsthand how hard caregiving is. She cared for her father-in-law, who had dementia. "Truly the most intense emotions I've ever experienced have been from being a live-in caregiver," she says. As a coping mechanism, she and her husband used to say to each other, "It's not him, it's the dementia."

"Intellectually, you know that," she says. "But emotionally you can just be so frustrated and almost angry with the person, and then you feel guilty."

Though it's not a full solution, there's now a push for caregivers' work to be financially supported. In the U.S., for example, many states now allow children, grandchildren and even friends to be paid for caregiving through Medicaid, and more and more are allowing spouses to be paid as well.

WEAVER'S LAB IS RESEARCHING HOW INFLAMMATION MAY AFFECT BRAIN FUNCTION.

The U.K. and Canada also offer financial support; in the U.K., people who make less than a set amount qualify for a carer's allowance, and Canada offers tax breaks to caregivers.

Programs to support caregivers are effective at preventing some of these issues, but it can be difficult for people providing full-time care to access them. Increasingly, information and support groups are being offered online, so that those who are caregiving without a break can log in from home at a time that works for them.

"It's been a breakthrough for caregivers that there's an increasing emphasis on their emotional and mental

health," says Scott. "Over the last 10, 15 years there has been a huge groundswell of support."

This also helps reduce the stigma about people with dementia, says Gibbs. "I'm very upfront with telling people about my Alzheimer's. A couple of weeks ago, my wife and I went to our 50th college reunion, and I talked to my classmates about it. Sometimes I think we're too hesitant to engage people with dementia."

MORE CLARITY ON THE CAUSES OF DEMENTIA

Weaver feels that over the past two decades, there has been a myopic focus on amyloid plaques. "The new drugs demonstrate that amyloid plays a role, but it's only one part of a big picture."

His lab is researching another factor: inflammation in the brain. "I think of Alzheimer's as an autoimmune disease of the brain, where the immune system is turned on by multiple factors like air pollution, depression or infections," he says. "Now you have a hopped-up immune system on a search-and-destroy mission in the brain. It's wandering around inside your skull, and oops, it searches for and destroys a few neurons, which causes inflammation."

Other researchers are also looking in different directions, he says: malfunctioning of the brain's mitochondria, which produce energy for cells; distortion of the brain's lipids; or damage to diseased cell membranes, which can kill the cell. Treatments being tested for other possible dementia causes include stem cell therapy and transcranial magnetic stimulation.

WEAVER WILL ALWAYS REMEMBER one of his first encounters with a dementia patient, a military veteran. "The poor man was so confused that he was hiding under his hospital bed," Weaver recalls. "He was reliving his war experiences. I got down on my hands and knees and looked into this man's eyes. It was heartbreaking. I thought, 'We've got to do something for these people.'"

After the frustrating decades since then of delivering the news to thousands of patients that they have dementia, he's more determined than ever to finally be able to tell them, "I have something that can help you."

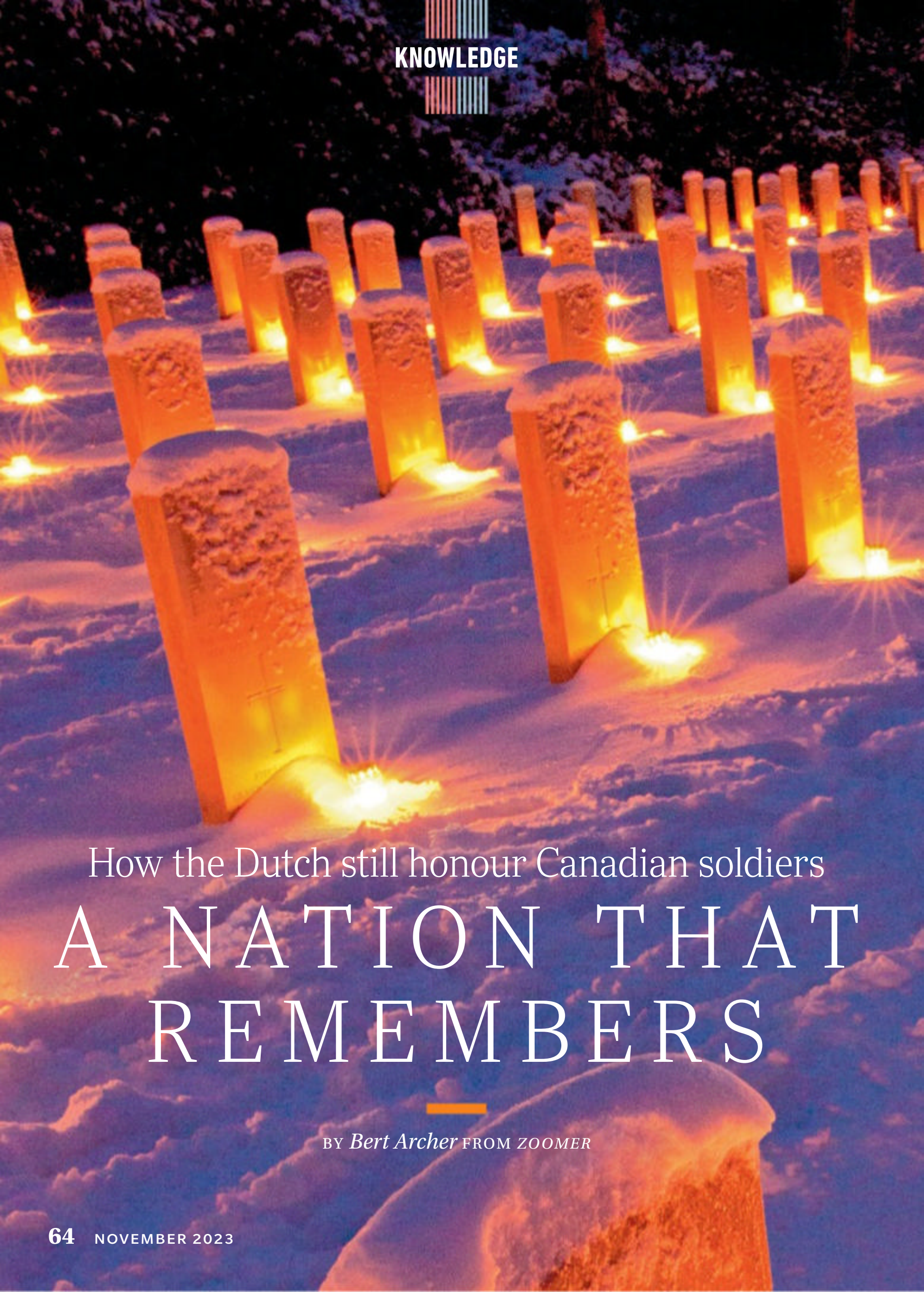
Athletic Inspiration

I've learned what it truly means to be Canadian, and in turn, I've been inspired to make a difference in the world.

CLARA HUGHES

If you're open to praise, you have to be open to criticism.

DONOVAN BAILEY



How the Dutch still honour Canadian soldiers

A NATION THAT REMEMBERS

BY *Bert Archer* FROM *ZOOMER*



Each year on Christmas Eve this cemetary in Holten is alight with candles.

IN A CEMETERY

just outside the Dutch town of Holten, in the eastern Netherlands, I heard a story about Leena van Dam, the Finnish-born widow of a Dutch man. One winter, she noticed a Finnish name on a headstone there and asked whether she could put a candle on it for Christmas Eve, as Finns do. It took some wrestling with the Commonwealth War Graves Commission, based in the United Kingdom, who even when they relented apparently insisted she would have to put a candle on every grave at her own expense.

Being no-nonsense and practical, she did that, starting in 1991. Since then, it's become a tradition across the country. Middle-school students are assigned a soldier, and they place a candle every December 24. Some schools have the students research "their" soldier and write an essay on what they've learned. I've seen photos of the cemeteries on the night they're lit. They'e beautiful.

I was visiting Holten in 2019, in advance of the 75th anniversary of the liberation of the Netherlands, a key step toward bringing World War II to an end. There's a grave there with Francis Welburn's name on it. He was the son of Winifred and Charles Welburn of Winnipegosis, Manitoba (population as of the most recent census: 945). Francis died on April 20, 1945, just eight days before Mussolini, 10 days before Hitler and less than four months before Hiroshima. He was 20.

The inscription reads: "Sleep on in peace, dear one, safe in the arms of Jesus, safe on his gentle breast," and though his parents wanted to think of him in the arms of Jesus, he actually died in the arms of his friend, Digby Smith.

Digby survived those critical 19 days before VE-Day, got married and lived to age 58. When he died, in 1982, his wife found a note that said he wanted to be buried beside Francis. She had to fight—the rules about who gets buried in cemeteries like these are pretty strict—but she won. His ashes, at least some of them, are snuggled up beside Francis.

THESE AREN'T THE ONLY STORIES spread out beneath the well-kept lawns behind the cemetery's towering Cross of Sacrifice war memorial. Two hundred of the 1,394 men and women buried at Holten were killed after VE-Day.

There are as many war stories in France, the U.K., Belgium, Germany and

(PREVIOUS SPREAD) BUITEN-BEELD/ALAMY STOCK PHOTO

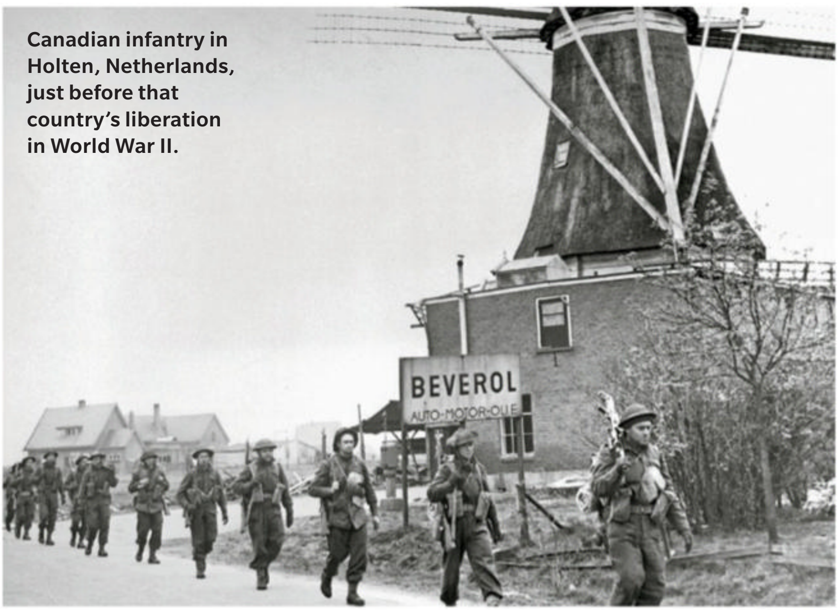
Italy. But in my view, they are nowhere better preserved or more ardently told than in the Netherlands, along the route of the liberators.

The memory of this war is alive here in a way that I've not seen anywhere else. Nearly every city and town has its own liberation day corresponding to the date the Allies, mostly Canadians, marched on what's now known as the liberation route. On that day, every year, notables gather in what you'd expect to be a rote marking of increasingly ancient events.

Yet the speeches are heartfelt, the words and phrases fresh, arresting, the product of someone thinking about the days and lives it took to separate these hectares from the Germans not as something to be merely remembered but to be felt. There are no pat "never agains," no adjectives to describe what the women and men who fought did.

In Bergen op Zoom, Sabine Nölke, who was at the time Canadian ambassador to the Netherlands, gave the sort of talk you'd love to hear from politicians but never do. Referring pointedly to today's resurgence of far-right attitudes, she asked, "What would they have thought, those who died for our freedom? They would not have understood our technologies but they would, I think, have understood our peril."

The Netherlands is not a big country—it's smaller than Nova Scotia—and



Canadian infantry in Holten, Netherlands, just before that country's liberation in World War II.

HISTORICAL/GETTY IMAGES

the fighting was long and intense, so every bit of geography and masonry is imbued with the war.

The Hotel de Draak in Bergen op Zoom is a 13th-century inn. A lot has happened there. It was one of only two buildings in the city to escape a great fire there in 1397, for instance. But it's hard to beat the fact that the hotel housed several German soldiers while its owner, a member of the resistance thought to be named Arnold Oribans, hid Jews between the floors, directly under the feet of the German officers. It's reminiscent of—but more dramatic than—a Quentin Tarantino movie.

AS THOSE WITH CLEAR MEMORIES AGE INTO THEIR LATE 90s, MANY ARE EAGER TO TELL THEIR STORY.

I'd started in Vlissingen, in the southwest of the country, and ended in Groningen, about 350 kilometres to the northeast, where the final battle was fought street by street, house to house. It's the route suggested by the Liberation Route Europe Foundation, an international organization with offices in the Netherlands, Belgium, Italy, France, Germany and the U.K. It was founded "to develop and share a multi-perspective understanding of the history of the Second World War."

In the Vlissingen area, I went to a liberation service remembering the Black Watch of Canada and the Calgary Highlanders who died for this early and crucial victory at the Battle of Walcheren Causeway. Jaap Rus, at age 95, one of the last living members of the Dutch resistance, laid a wreath and chatted with congregants in Dutch and English. (It would be his last service; he died three months later.)

You'll hear some of the best liberation stories in the city of Groningen. Tourists tend to miss this destination, but it is home to one of the great Dutch museums (Groninger Museum), some of the best genever (Holland's answer to gin) and, in 1945, the site of one of the war's hardest-fought liberations. Though only 39 years old, my guide, Joël Stoppels, has made the war, specifically how it played out in his hometown of Groningen, his life's work.

For the 70th anniversary of the liberation, Stoppels organized a re-enactment of the events surrounding the death of the first Canadian soldier to be killed in the liberation of Groningen: Fred Butterworth, 22, of Winnipeg's Fort Garry Horse, whose tank was hit by a German anti-tank rocket launcher and burned.

There are many plaques all over Europe like the one on the wall of the house that Butterworth's tank crashed into after he lost control of it. But here, 6,000 people watched the re-enactment from the windows and sidewalks—including Fred's brother Stanley, who was with Fred in Groningen when he died—and

it was covered live by the NPO, the Dutch national broadcaster. The war is now, as it was then, everywhere.

As Stoppels leads the way through the streets, pointing out battle scars, he points to the Hooghoudt distillery and tells another story. After the hard work of liberating was done, a bunch of Canadian soldiers walked into the hulking stone building, sat down and drank their fill (probably of fruit wine, which is what kept the place going during the war).

When a bunch of vets came back for the 70th anniversary, they were given a tour of the distillery—and then presented with a bill for everything they and their buddies drank that long-ago day. Uneasy glances gave way to laughter as hands were placed gently on shoulders with another round of thanks. The drinks, they were reassured, had been on the house.

It's an especially poignant time to visit these places. As those with clear memories of the events age into their late 90s, many are eager to tell their stories to make sure they outlive them. The more people I spoke to, events I attended and memorials to Canadian soldiers I contemplated, the greater the feeling that this is not only a good trip for a Canadian to take, it borders on national duty; to remember, to acknowledge and accept the thanks of a still-grateful nation on behalf of our elders.

A tour so filled with destruction, atrocity and death might not suit everyone, understandably. But there's another thing separating the Dutch from their European neighbours with similar histories: a strong, if sometimes morbid, sense of humour. It allows their war stories to be told with a certain lightness.

Ultimately, what struck me most is the sense of duty to history among the Dutch. I've paid my respects at cenotaphs around Canada on Remembrance Day but always with a sense that the war was long ago and far away. Standing on this low-slung, hard-won ground, it's clearly neither.

Jaap Rus, who had a lot to mourn the day I met him and softly shook his hand, was one big smile. Failing hands, perhaps, but faith unbroken. R

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Artful Insights

I saw the angel in the marble and I carved until I set him free.

MICHELANGELO

The artist is nothing without the gift, but the gift is nothing without work.

EMILE ZOLA





How To Get Along with Anyone

Master awkward conversations with these nine tricky personality types

BY *Rosemary Counter*

WHILE POLITELY MAKING small talk at a baby shower, my day was ruined in one fell swoop. "Ooh, are you expecting?!" asked a family friend, eyeballing me up and down. I sheepishly shook my head, instantly regretting both my party dress and my plate full of mini-sandwiches. Then, just when I thought the conversation couldn't get worse, it did: "Well," she asked earnestly, "why not?"

My mind flooded with reasons and retorts—"just fat, thanks," deep-rooted doubts about my maternal capabilities,

ILLUSTRATIONS BY *Clayton Hanmer*

fear of climate change, or perhaps a well-deserved expletive—but, sadly, none materialized. Instead I murmured a few words about being busy with work and excused myself to mope for the rest of the afternoon.



I've since recovered emotionally, but I sometimes daydream about a do-over. What should I have said to a nosy question from a rude person? And how about all those other, um, challenging personalities we have to talk to whether we want to or not? Just in time for the holidays, I asked experts about how to deal with the trickiest, tackiest, meanest and most maddening personalities—with nary a single swear word.

THE COMPLAINER

You know the type: This restaurant's too pricey, the music's too loud, their burger is overdone and they can hardly taste it anyhow because they're coming down with something. As *Saturday Night Live*'s famous Debbie Downer sketch goes: "*Wha, whaaa, whaaaaa.*"

In real life, the Complainer isn't so funny. "This is a person who thinks life's unfair to them," says Jody Carrington, a psychologist and author of *Feeling Seen: Reconnecting in a Disconnected World* whose practice is in Olds, Alberta. Nobody is that bummed out by a burger; they're down about other, bigger things and are taking it out on specific, controllable things like what's on their plate (not to mention the unfortunate server who delivered it).

How should you deal with this good-mood thief? "If you want to interact better with these people, it starts with empathy," says Carrington. (This is true for all tricky personalities, but especially for a Complainer.) Start by removing the small stuff from the equation—maybe let them choose the restaurant—so you can both focus on the big picture. Get them to talk about what's really bothering them and challenge their negativity with questions about what's good, fun and exciting in their lives.

Like the old adage goes, says Carrington: "You've gotta kill 'em with kindness and hope it rubs off."

THE CONTRARIAN

You say it's a nice day; they say it's too hot. You've read a good book; it was the worst book they've read in a decade. You mention that they contradict everything you say; they say, "No, I don't!"

"A Contrarian is someone who just likes to argue," explains Mónica Guzmán, Seattle, Washington-based author of *I Never Thought of It That Way: How to Have Fearlessly Curious Conversations in Dangerously Divided Times*. "Sometimes this is fun, but other times it's aggressive and unpleasant. The Contrarian can't always tell the difference." So while you're arguing the issue at hand, they're arguing for the sake of argument—and so they win every time.

How to better brave this battle? A Contrarian only wants to spar, so pick your battles. For anything inconsequential, says Ian Leslie, a London, England-based argument expert and author of *Conflicted: Why Arguments Are Tearing Us Apart and How They Can Bring Us Together*, "the most disarming way to handle a contrarian is to say you agree with them."

This doesn't mean you should lie; try "I agree with you on *that*" about something small and specific, or "I can definitely see your point" if you truly don't agree on a single thing. Then change the topic.

When you want to instead stand your ground, you can move the Contrarian beyond their default defence position by becoming a more nuanced opponent. "You can sometimes get them off the opinion showdown by asking them for their story or experience with a matter," says Guzmán. Asking "How did you come to believe that?" or "Has that ever happened to you?" can move a conversation away from a competition of opinions and toward a personal perspective. You might learn that you value their opinion after all.

THE CHATTERBOX

If you can't ever seem to finish a story or sentence, chances are you're face-to-face with a Chatterbox. Despite the cute name, they can be a frustrating bunch,



explains communication expert Sandy Gerber of Vancouver Island. The author of *Emotional Magnetism: How to Communicate to Ignite Connection in Your Relationships* puts it plainly: "The Chatterbox is a story stealer. They identify with whatever you're saying and then barf out a story about themselves."

It can feel like the Chatterbox is constantly trying to one-up you, but it's not necessarily true. They could be socially anxious, uncomfortable with silence or just extra passionate and excitable. But whatever the reason, they probably don't even notice they do this, nor the deeper reason why.

"Particularly in kids, Chatterboxes could just as easily be called connection seekers," says Carrington. "That's all they're after, but they're not giving you the chance to connect back, so they talk even more." And because they're chatting a mile a minute in this tediously talkative Catch-22, you might not notice until you're irked on the drive home, having realized all your stories were hijacked.

Next time, try the phrase you'd least expect: "Tell me more." Says Carrington: "Choose a topic and let them exhaust it. Ask them questions, follow up and really listen."

Once the Chatterbox has run out of things to say, their need to be heard has been met, so now it's your turn. Jump in with something like "I love your stories and I have one for you, too." For once, the floor is yours.

THE TECH ADDICT

Socially, few things are more annoying than someone repeatedly checking their phone in the middle of your conversation with them. Soon enough, you're projecting sulky thoughts their way like, *I'm boring you/You're more concerned with whoever's on that phone than me/You don't care about me,* explains Carrington. None of that's necessarily true, but this is: "If someone is engaged in a great conversation, they wouldn't care about their phone," she says. Ouch.

Whether you say something or not,





remember the Tech-Addict's annoying habits aren't about you. "It's rude, for sure, but sometimes we mistake the behaviour for more than what it is," says Leslie. "It's very possible they're just nervous or anxious," he says. It's also possible their partner is stranded with a flat tire or their kid is sick. The point is, you don't know.

So before you hastily rage at the Tech-Addict's blatant rudeness, focus instead on building a better conversation than whatever's going down on Instagram.

You might never be able to achieve this, given the power of today's clickbait, so if you're close enough to a person, Carrington advises you to cheekily ask them: "What's on that thing that's so alluring?" Chances are they'll apologize and sheepishly tuck the phone away. (But if the answer is something real, talk about it.)

Better yet, avoid the situation in advance by saying something like, "I'm really interested in catching up properly, so how about we leave our phones in the car?" If they indeed have that flat tire or sick kid, you won't have to assume it's because your stories all suck.

THE POLITICAL ANTAGONIST

Oh boy. This person's ideology is fundamentally different than yours. They've read the news (and/or the dark web) and, as usual, they're ready and eager to rumble.

No family is immune to political differences, though Guzmán has a particularly complicated case: She's the liberal daughter of Mexican immigrants who voted for Donald Trump twice, and naturally they want to discuss differing politics loudly over dessert.

Like the Contrarian, the Political Antagonist loves to argue, only they've got a great big end game of changing your mind. They can't, and won't, change theirs, and neither will you, because you're both passionate about your politics—which is exactly why they've singled you out for a fight. *Sigh.*

Turn that bad thought good, however, by remembering they chose you

because they consider you a worthy intellectual opponent and cannot operate without you. "If they're your adversary, you're probably theirs, too," Guzmán says.

Politics and religion used to be hard no-go zones of polite conversation, but not so anymore—and that's a good thing. "Heat in a conversation is good," says Guzmán. "It means you're exposing yourself to different points of view and you're learning and challenging each other."

Ian Leslie concurs: "Many couples and families thrive on these discussions, which can sound like arguments. It's all about having richer and more productive arguments, not avoiding arguments."

How can you avoid a pointless squabble? "The line is personal hostility, and don't cross it," says Leslie. If you're even nearing that boundary, turn down the dial. If your sparring partner is getting angry or aggressive, try Guzmán's suggestion to de-escalate: "I'm sorry, I didn't realize that this mattered so much to you." You could continue with "tell me more," if and only if a more productive conversation feels possible.

But if the discussion is just too heated, a distraction makes for an excellent exit strategy. Try "Time for pie! Apple or pumpkin?" (Because we can all agree on pie.)



THE INAPPROPRIATE JOKESTER

Every family has one, so let's call him "Uncle Bob": He's loud and brash, his opinions haven't changed since the '80s, and just as you're happily passing the potatoes, he decides to drop a totally inappropriate word or joke.

There are some possible explanations for the Inappropriate Jokester's regular faux pas. "They could be blind to their prejudices, are trying to be controversial or are intolerant of other points of view," explains Chuck Wisner, a Massachusetts-based leadership adviser, personal coach and author of *The Art of Conscious Conversations: Transforming How We Talk, Listen, and Interact*. But none of these explanations justifies discrimination.

Now, *ah*, this is awkward. Should you feign a chuckle to keep the peace or make a scene and confront Bob for his (racist, sexist, classist, homophobic) "joke"? Naturally, it depends. "If a person who represents that particular group is present, you probably need to intervene because it's the right thing to do," says Guzmán. You should say something both for that person's dignity and to avoid your eternal guilt as silent bystander—an act that often hurts the offended person as much as the joke does.

But you don't have to declare Uncle Bob a despicable racist and insist he change his ways this instant (he won't). "Saying 'Uncle Bob, that's not okay,'" as Guzmán suggests, says everything that everyone's thinking in few words. Or try Wisner's phrasing: "That sounds racist to me. I know you don't mean that." The jokester is unlikely to double down with "I do, actually, as I'm very racist."

If the comment is so inflammatory it sparks further conversation, be careful to critique the joke, not the person, and frame your criticism as your own. Wisner suggests saying: "To me, that joke is offensive. Let me tell you why." This could be a good chat for later, when Bob is calm and alone, when there's time for a non-confrontational conversation about what's really going on.

"There's something in every bad joke that says, 'I'm frustrated but I can't say it,'" says Guzmán. If you can get Bob to let it out, hopefully he'll do better at the next family gathering.

THE DRAMA QUEEN

"The Chatterbox on steroids," in Carrington's words, the Drama Queen (or King) is someone who similarly dominates the conversation, chatting your ear off about all the wild things you will never believe are happening in the "Worst. Week. Ever!" (The boring details of your week, meanwhile, can't possibly compare so don't even try.)

Ugh, why are they like this? "This person's always exaggerating because they want to be the centre of attention," says Gerber. The more they do this, the more we pull away from the over-the-top emotions of a life in constant crisis.

"We tend to avoid them because keeping up with the drama is an energy sucker," says Carrington. "But this only means they'll turn it up. They've often exhausted the people in their lives and are therefore coming on even stronger." The Drama Queen desperately wants your attention and she's also terrified she'll lose it, hence the show she's putting on in hopes you'll never look away.

You might think the Drama Queen expects the royal treatment, but deep down what she wants to know is that you'd meet her for lunch without the dramatic display. Resist the urge to cut her off and instead set some boundaries you can both stick to.

"Be really clear in advance about what you're willing and not willing to do," says Carrington. Maybe this means you'll talk about her ex for 20 minutes but no longer. Or maybe it means you reschedule lunch until "a

week when you're feeling better." She might be mad in the moment, but the Drama Queen secretly loves the regular-person treatment that shows you're sticking around for the real her—no drama required.



THE FRENEMY

Though all these personalities are difficult, perhaps none is more so than the Frenemy—that is, someone who is equal parts friend and enemy—a phenomenon so subtle, personal and complicated that sometimes you have to be in it to know it's there. "I call this a see-saw friendship," says Gerber, "because of the highs and lows—you never know what you're going to get." One day your friend is fun and fab and a blast to be with, while the next they're low-key mad or mean—and you have no clue why.

Except really you know exactly why: "The Frenemy is a passive-aggressive person motivated by their perceived lack of value," says Gerber. "And they're rolling their eyes at anything that you have or do that feels like it's undervaluing them." To feel better about themselves, the Frenemy is desperate to knock you down a little bit at a time.

When dealing with a Frenemy, protect yourself by recognizing a negative judgment and not taking it personally. "These people are almost firing arrows at you," explains Wisner, "so you can dodge the arrow, let the arrow pierce and hurt or offend you, or you can catch the arrow and stop it." Options A and B are easy in the moment, but C is the brave choice if you want things to change. To start a difficult conversation, Wisner suggests saying, "That doesn't feel sincere to me. Did you mean that?"

That might address a particular jab, but if you actually want to fix and save the friendship—and maybe you don't—you're going to need to dig deeper. "These people are highly competitive on the surface, but underneath they're insecure, hurt and highly distrustful," says Gerber. To turn a frenemy into a real friend, you're going to have to open up and talk about it. "Tell them what you're looking for in a friendship and

what you're willing to offer," she says. "But if they can't or won't have that conversation, well, that's your answer."

THE OVERSHARER

Unsolicited commentary about someone's sex life, their best friend's messy divorce or whatever just happened in the bathroom (yuck) are all clues you've got an Oversharer on your hands. Whether they're telling too much or asking for details you're not comfortable sharing, this all-too-common persona has neither a filter nor boundaries.

Why oh why would anyone in their right mind list their irritable bowel sydrome symptoms over brunch? Because they have two specific human qualities overlapping at once. The first is an unwritten personal boundary that's far, far from yours.

"The discomfort you feel comes from a difference of standards about what topics of conversation are okay," says Wisner. "What they consider to be acceptable, need-to-know information is different than what it is for you."

At the same awkward time, the Oversharer is only trying to get closer to you by revealing more about themselves—and hoping you'll be similarly forthcoming. "We tend to label these people as nosy, invasive or rude," notes Gerber, "but they really just want to be liked and accepted."

To satisfy the Oversharer, and simultaneously veto the endless commentary, consider sharing something else—still personal but less invasive, ideally—that satisfies their urge to connect. When they really cross the line, don't be shy (they're not), and say something that indicates your boundary is being crossed. "*Omg*, that's private!" says everything, and you'll never have to bring it up again.

A compliment also works wonders with an Oversharer, adds Gerber, because it refocuses the conversation in their direction while subtly resetting your boundary. For example, I could have given this wise response to my nosy family friend who asked about the state of my uterus: "You made having kids look so easy! How did you do it?" (Then nod and smile, nod and smile.)

I won't get my baby shower do-over in this life, but next time I'll be ready to face an Oversharer—or any of the challenging people it takes to make a world.

Visionary Quest

True intelligence requires fabulous imagination.

IAN McEWAN

Art is not what you see,
but what you make others see.

EDGAR DEGAS



When she was born, Hallee McCoombes wasn't expected to walk. Now she runs.

She Defied All the Odds

When doctors told the McCoombes that spina bifida would severely limit their daughter's life, they refused to listen. So did the little girl.

BY *Sabrina Rogers-Anderson*

PHOTOGRAPH BY *Sabrina Lauriston*

As Hallee McCoombes approaches the finish line

of the 800-metre run for kids with a disability, the crowd is cheering wildly and chanting her name. The 10-year-old para-athlete had spent months preparing for the 2022 School Sport Australia Track & Field Championships in Brisbane. Now she has the hyper-focused expression that has become her trademark; anyone who has seen her compete knows that nothing will stop her now.

With only 10 metres to go, Hallee tunes out all the noise and pushes forward with every ounce of her strength. She doesn't have any feeling in her waist or below her knees, but pain sears her thighs. When Hallee crosses the finish line and falls into an exhausted heap, her twin, Jada, scoops her up in her arms. "You came in third!" she whispers to Hallee.

Hallee McCoombes has tallied numerous Australian track-and-field records in events for athletes with her type of impairments—100 metres, 200 metres, 400 metres, 800 metres, 1,500 metres, long jump, discus and javelin—and has set her sights on the Paralympics. It's an amazing achievement for someone who wasn't even expected to walk. Hallee was born with spina bifida, a neural-tube defect that affects how the spine and spinal cord form in the womb.

Her mother, Christine McCoombes, 38, shudders when she recalls learning about Hallee's diagnosis. "The doctors also told us they didn't know what kind of brain function she would have because she had hydrocephalus," she recalls. "Fluid in the brain is common with spina bifida. We really didn't know how much she'd be able to function physically and mentally."

It's no wonder that, regardless of how many times Hallee's parents watch their determined daughter compete, their hearts burst with pride. "I cry every time, especially when people start cheering for her," admits her dad, Gavin, 51.

A Dream Come True

Christine and Gavin met in 2007, when they were both working for a bank in Brisbane. Romance quickly sparked between them, and within two years they had married, started a cleaning business and set their sights on having children.

The journey to parenthood wasn't easy: They faced the pain of multiple

miscarriages. When they found out they were expecting twin girls in 2011, Gavin and Christine were over the moon. But the couple's joy turned to anguish when Hallee's spina bifida was revealed during Christine's 20-week ultrasound.

"They couldn't get a clear picture of the extent of it because her sister was taking up so much room, so they gave us the worst-case scenarios," says Christine. "That really scared us."

The doctors explained that they would typically recommend termination, but the situation with fraternal twins is more complicated: The wrong baby might be terminated. It was also possible that neither baby would survive the procedure.

Despite the grim outlook, Christine and Gavin chose to go ahead with the pregnancy; they had been hoping for a baby for too long.

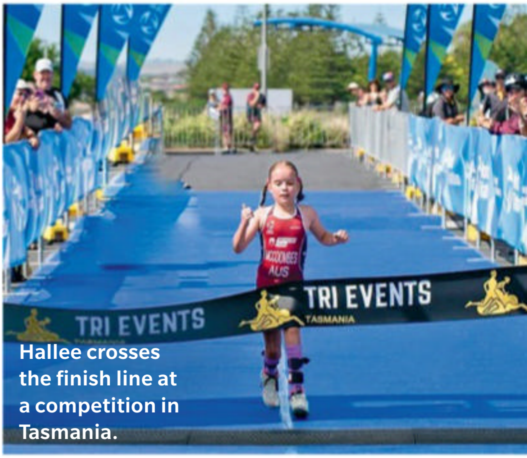
To the McCoombes' dismay, not everyone supported their decision. Some family members said they should terminate, and sometimes the couple felt very alone. Determined to keep going, they put on a brave face. They also followed their pediatrician's advice not to look up information about spina bifida online because it would only add to their stress.

When Hallee and Jada came into the world in December 2011, their parents didn't get to experience the emotional first cuddles they'd seen in the movies. Jada had to be whisked away seconds after birth because her placenta had ruptured, cutting off her oxygen supply. As for Hallee, her back was open, her spinal cord hanging out.

With both their newborns in intensive care, the new parents were left alone to deal with their fear and anguish.

Hallee underwent immediate surgery to repair her spinal cord and close her back. During the gruelling nine-hour procedure, a neurosurgeon placed Hallee's neural tissues in her spinal canal and a plastic surgeon closed her back. Although the surgery was a success and Jada was also doing well, Christine and Gavin weren't able to take their daughters home for another four weeks.

HALLEE FACED MANY CHALLENGES in her first year. As she recovered from surgery, she had to be placed on her stomach most of the time. Christine and Gavin needed to monitor Hallee's breathing because sleeping on her tummy put her



Hallee crosses the finish line at a competition in Tasmania.

COURTESY OF GAVIN McCOOMBES

at a higher risk of sudden infant death syndrome. And whenever the family drove somewhere, Hallee was placed in a car seat with a special lining to protect her back.

When she was three months old, Hallee had a procedure to remove some of the fluid in her brain; if left untreated, hydrocephalus can result in brain damage or even death. But the surgery failed, and she was back in hospital a few months later for a second attempt. To her parents' relief, that surgery was successful.

As those early months passed, the McCoombes were pleasantly surprised to see Hallee hitting her developmental milestones shortly after Jada did, including talking, rolling over and crawling. "Her first word was 'mama' at 10 months," says Gavin. "Her only big delay was walking."

Most children start walking sometime between 10 and 18 months, but Hallee needed casts to realign her feet, which were twisted and pointed upward. When the casts were removed, she had to wear ankle-foot orthoses (AFOs) and heavy boots to continue correcting the position of her feet. (Hallee, now 11, still wears AFOs to support her feet and ankles when she walks and runs; she gets around in a wheelchair over longer distances.)

Despite her struggles, Hallee had a secret weapon: a twin sister she was desperate to keep up with. "Jada definitely helped her with her disability," says Christine with a smile. "Hallee needed a metal walking frame, and Jada would get in with her and move it for her. It was so cute!"

Hallee eventually started using the walker on her own. By the time the girls were two, they'd race around the house banging into walls and laughing. "They'd talk their twin language," Christine says. "We had no idea what they were saying."

Once Hallee started walking on her own at age three, her determination to keep up with Jada only grew stronger.

"I Can Do That, Too"

Still, life was challenging for Hallee. At preschool, she often had to be held upright to be fed. And since she couldn't regulate her body temperature, she suffered in hot and cold weather. Because of the demands of their business, Gavin and Christine employed nannies to care for the girls, who now had a little sister, Tia. But that made them feel as if the girls' childhoods were passing them by. They knew they needed to make some changes.

So when the twins were five, the McCoombes moved to Elliott Heads, a coastal town 400 kilometres north of Brisbane, where life was less busy, giving Christine and Gavin more time with their children. They haven't looked back. "Hallee has never been so happy," Christine says. "I think it's living on the ocean."

Shortly after the move, Jada declared that she wanted to be a runner. Her parents signed her up for Little Athletics, a track-and-field organization for children



Hallee hopes to compete in tennis at the Paralympics. Here she is pictured with her twin sister, Jada.



COURTESY OF GAVIN McCOOMBES

and teenagers. After watching on the sidelines during Jada's first training session, Hallee turned to her parents and said, "I can do that, too. Sign me up."

Would she even be able to run? "Hallee doesn't have feeling in her waist and lower legs," explains Gavin, "which means she has issues with her balance and her muscle power."

But Hallee's parents has such strong belief in her that they signed her up. At first, she had to become more conscious of the vibrations created when her feet hit the ground and use that feeling to coordinate her movements. Before long she was running with Jada. "She had to work hard to maintain upper leg muscle and core support," Gavin says.

In her second season with Little Athletics, Hallee started competing in running events for kids with a disability. The McCoombes were soon taking both girls to competitions around the country.

Hallee's new-found passion wasn't without its challenges. Her legs ached badly during and after races, and she feared that people would laugh at her. Gavin and Christine helped her work through her anxiety by attending all her events. In fact, nobody laughed; people marvelled at her fierce determination.

Hallee's parents, however, weren't spared criticism. "Some people thought we were too hard on her or that she was in pain and didn't want to do it," says Christine. "But we could see the benefits she was getting. Hallee just loved it."

Participating in athletics was also good for her mental health—she learned what she was capable of and became even closer to Jada. "Hallee still gets anxious, but sport has helped so much,"

says Christine. "It's made her happier and more resilient."

And the physical rewards speak for themselves. While most children with spina bifida require dozens of surgeries to treat bowel and bladder problems, as well as orthopedic issues like contracted muscles, dislocated hips and deformed feet and ankles, Hallee has undergone only 10 so far.

"She's been able to put off ankle, foot, leg and knee surgeries," says Gavin. "That's not to say she won't ever need them, but surgeons believe that getting out of her wheelchair and being so active has strengthened muscles that would normally be weak. They've told us, 'Whatever you're doing is working, so keep doing it.'"



The McCoombes family in their hometown of Elliott Heads: (back row, left to right) Jada, Gavin and Christine, (front) Tia and Hallee.

Occupational therapist Karla Kirchner has worked with Hallee for three years to improve her gross motor skills, core strength, cognitive skills, sensory processing and emotional regulation. She dubs Hallee a "miracle girl" but is quick to point out that she wouldn't be where she is today without her determination to beat the odds.

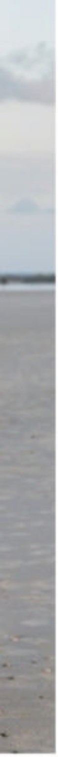
"She has surprised every health professional," says Kirchner. "She's a go-getter, a hard worker and a positive ball of energy. Her work ethic would put anyone to shame. The power of 'I believe I can, therefore I do' applies to Hallee."

WHEN SHE WAS SIX, Hallee started competing in triathlons. In the version of the event open to para-athletes aged five to 12, competitors swim 100 metres, cycle two kilometres and run 500 metres. Hallee uses a modified trike in the cycling segment.

She also does shot put, discus, javelin and long jump. At age eight, she added wheelchair tennis to her roster—a discipline that may be her ticket to the 2028 Summer Paralympics in Los Angeles.

"I want to go to America to see my granddad," says Hallee with a grin. Christine's father, who lives in Nevada, has always been very close to Hallee.

PHOTOGRAPH BY *Sabrina Lauriston*



"She hasn't seen him since before Covid, but he FaceTimes her every morning," explains Christine. "We often call him when she's racing so he can see her compete."

Wheelchair tennis may be the only way Hallee will qualify for the Paralympics, which has no events for athletes with lower-leg impairments who compete without prostheses. Her AFOs aren't considered prostheses because they don't replace a missing body part.

"It's a battle we keep fighting," says Gavin. "I emailed the Paralympic Committee in Germany to ask if they would offer an event for that classification, but I didn't get much of a response. I think they should include that option, and if it turns out there aren't enough athletes, then it doesn't happen. But at least it would give people like Hallee something to aspire to."

Adds Christine, who as a project coordinator for Little Athletics Australia advocates for inclusion in sport, "We just have to keep fighting or there won't be any change."

A Bright Future

When she isn't training, competing or getting physical therapy, Hallee enjoys chatting online and playing Roblox with her friends on her tablet.

But Hallee has a few more tasks on her daily to-do list than her friends do. For one thing, many people with spina bifida experience bowel and bladder dysfunction, so Hallee can't go to the toilet like most people do. She needs a catheter to empty her bladder and she has to do a bowel flush every second day. "Hallee has a tube in her belly button that's connected to her bowel," explains Gavin. "We open the cap and flush through a solution using a syringe and an adapter."

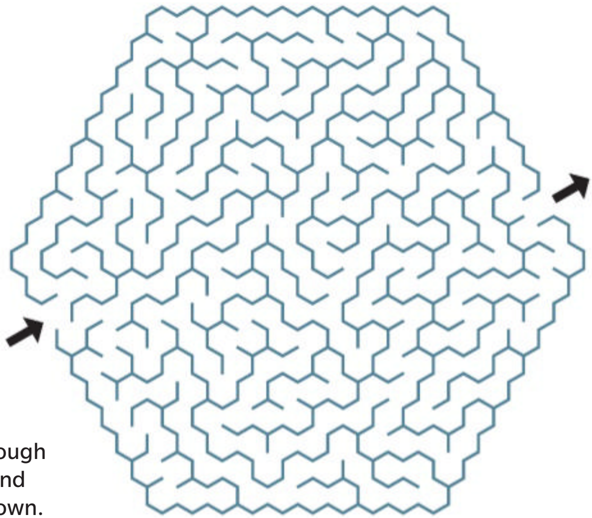
Hallee and Jada still go to competitions together and are closer than ever. "They're in separate classes at school, but if one is having an issue, the other one seems to know," Christine says. "At night, we can't separate them. They're always snuggling."

Nine-year-old Tia looks up to her older sisters. She also does athletics but has told her parents that she doesn't want to compete because she wouldn't be as good as Hallee and Jada.

If Hallee qualifies for the 2028 Paralympics, which will be held while she's still in high school, she'll consider trying out for the 2032 Games in Brisbane.

And after that? All Gavin and Christine want is for Hallee to be happy and independent. As for Hallee, she dreams of being a midwife. It's something she told her mum a few years ago but was torn because she also wanted to be a Paralympian. Christine told her that she could do both; if she made it to the Paralympics, she could tick that off her list, then study to be a midwife.

When asked what she would say to other children with a disability, Hallee offers two powerful pieces of advice: "Don't listen when people say you can't do something. And try your best." R



Pathfinder

MEDIUM Trace a path through the labyrinth, entering and exiting by the arrows shown.

Sweet Treat

EASY The dessert table at the birthday party has 12 cupcakes in three different flavours: chocolate, caramel and vanilla. Nine of the cupcakes are chocolate or caramel, and eight are caramel or vanilla. How many caramel cupcakes are there?



PATHFINDER BY LOUIS-LUC BEAUDOIN; SWEET TREAT BY FRASER SIMPSON

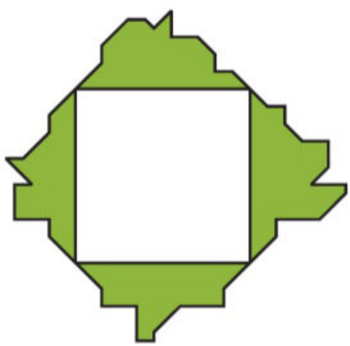
No Big Deal

DIFFICULT Each playing card's position depends on the two cards directly above it. Which card should appear at the bottom? Hint: They were dealt from a single deck.



On the Flip Side

MEDIUM When the four shapes shown are flipped over into the central white space, they form a square ... with a hole in it. What is the shape of the hole?



For answers, turn to **PAGE 90**

NO BIG DEAL AND ON THE FLIPSIDE BY DARREN RIGBY; (PLAYING CARDS ILLUSTRATION) МАКСИМ ЛЕБЕДИК/GETTY IMAGES

SUDOKU

BY *Louis-Luc Beaudoin*

8			7				9	
	1					3	4	
		7	4					
	4		3					6
2				4	6			5
3				8	2			9
	9	3				2		
5	6				7			
			9	1			6	

To Solve This Puzzle

Put a number from 1 to 9 in each empty square so that:

✦ every horizontal row and vertical column contains all nine numbers (1-9) without repeating any of them;

✦ each of the outlined 3 x 3 boxes has all nine numbers, none repeated.

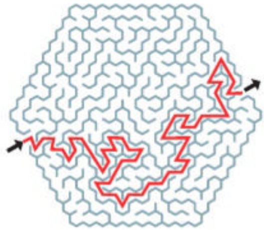
SOLUTION

8	5	4	7	6	3	1	9	2
6	1	2	8	9	5	3	4	7
9	3	7	4	2	1	6	5	8
1	4	5	3	7	9	8	2	6
2	8	9	1	4	6	7	3	5
3	7	6	5	8	2	4	1	9
4	9	3	6	5	8	2	7	1
5	6	1	2	3	7	9	8	4
7	2	8	9	1	4	5	6	3

BRAIN GAMES ANSWERS

FROM PAGE 88

Pathfinder



Sweet Treat

5.

No Big Deal

Each card is the sum of the two numbers immediately above it; black cards have a positive number and red cards have a negative number. Therefore, the sum of seven of clubs (+7) and the four of hearts (-4) is +3. The three of clubs has already been laid, so the missing card must be the three of spades.

On the Flip Side



TRIVIA

BY *Samantha Rideout*



KEITH TSUJI / STRINGER/GETTY IMAGES

1. What innocent-sounding computer virus infected more than 45 million machines in 2000, impacting banks, businesses and governments globally?

2. What American pop star invented a keyboard/guitar hybrid dubbed the Purpleaxxe?

3. What semiaquatic animal is the only living mammal species that lays eggs, other than the echidna?

4. Which one of the following public figures is not vegan: Ariana Grande, the Dalai Lama or Benedict Cumberbatch?

5. Which Canadian province could you circumnavigate entirely on foot by following a 700-kilometre-long walking trail?

6. What famous Danish actor was trained in contemporary ballet and gymnastics before he launched into Hollywood stardom?

7. Earlier this year, what U.S. city hired a director of rodent mitigation, a position nicknamed the "rat czar"?

8. What tree nuts need to be boiled or soaked before they are safe for humans to eat?

9. Which NHL team won four straight championships in the 1980s and popularized the tradition of players growing beards during the Stanley Cup playoffs?

10. What object accounts for nearly half of the estimated 80,000 tonnes of plastic in the Great Pacific Garbage Patch, the largest accumulation of ocean plastic in the world?

11. Researchers recently concluded that hallucinogenic drugs were used by

Bronze Age Europeans based on traces found in what archaeological evidence?

12. What is the world's largest tech company headquartered outside of the United States?

13. Among the works that have been translated into Klingon, the language spoken by a fictional alien race in *Star Trek*, are *The Art of War*, *The Wonderful Wizard of Oz* and two plays by whom?

14. Which continent is home to the Bellingshausen Sea, Terre Adélie and Dome Fuji?

15. By 2100, climate change will result in five percent more of what dazzling optical phenomenon?

16. Opioids are naturally produced in the human body. True or false?

17. American farmer Mike Yurosek revolutionized the sale of what common vegetable in the 1980s by creating cute "baby" versions as a way of selling the "ugly" portion of his crop?

18. Each summer, a noisy parade of people wearing large papier mâché heads takes place throughout eastern Canada as part of the celebration of National Acadian Day. What is the event called?

19. What multinational e-commerce company, now valued at more than US$1 trillion, was nearly called Cadabra before the founder switched to the firm's current name in 1994?

20. A TV commercial for what toy, the subject of a 2023 film directed by Greta Gerwig, first aired during the *Mickey Mouse Club* variety show in 1959?

Answers: 1. The Love Bug. **2.** Prince. **3.** Platypus. **4.** The Dalai Lama. **5.** Prince Edward Island. **6.** Mads Mikkelsen. **7.** New York City. **8.** Acorns. **9.** The New York Islanders. **10.** Fishing nets. **11.** Hair. **12.** Samsung, in South Korea. **13.** William Shakespeare. **14.** Antarctica. **15.** Rainbows, due to there being less snow and more rain in many parts of the world. **16.** True. Endogenous opioids, such as beta-endorphins, are produced in the brain and help control pain. **17.** Carrots: Yurosek shaved them down to make mini versions. **18.** Tintamarre. **19.** Amazon. **20.** Barbie.

CROSSWORD ANSWER

FROM PAGE 95

E	T	C		C	R	E	S	T	E	D
V	A	L		H	E	R	O	I	N	E
I	L	O	V	E	C	A	N	A	D	A
C	U	T	I	E		S	O	R	E	L
T	S	H	I	R	T		F	A	D	S
				S	O	S				
S	U	M	S		O	N	E	S	I	E
O	N	A	I	R		I	M	I	N	D
F	R	O	M	E	H	T	O	Z	E	D
A	E	R	O	B	I	C		E	P	I
S	P	I	N	A	C	H		S	T	E

WORD POWER

By Zeus! You may be surprised to learn how much Greek mythology lives on in everyday words, whether in their origins or their meanings. Consider *echo* (for the nymph doomed to repeat others' words), *erotic* (out of Eros, the god of love) or even *cloth* (Clotho, the Fate who spun the thread of life). Consult your inner *oracle*, then turn the page for the answers.

BY *Mary-Liz Shaw*

1. tantalize *v.*
A dream
B tease
C inspire

2. zephyr *n.*
A gentle west wind
B light touch
C quick turn

3. Sisyphean *adj.*
A constant and ineffective
B difficult
C worthwhile

4. halcyon *adj.*
A sugary
B secretive
C idyllically calm

5. heliotropic *adj.*
A brightly lit
B powerful
C sun-following

6. nemesis *n.*
A flatterer
B archrival
C secretary

7. iridescent *adj.*
A rainbow hued
B uncomplicated
C many sided

8. lethargy *n.*
A lack of energy
B anxiety
C perception

9. labyrinth *n.*
A path
B maze
C misunderstanding

10. psyche *n.*
A singer
B actor
C soul

11. stentorian *adj.*
A dictatorial
B extremely loud
C stretched out

12. hector *v.*
A call
B bully
C ignore

13. mnemonic *n.*
A memory device
B confusion
C funny anecdote

14. aegis *n.*
A influence
B patronage
C accident

15. hedonist *n.*
A patriot
B pursuer of pleasure
C athlete



Be Afraid. Be Very Afraid.

When it comes to our deepest fears, the Greeks can really psych us out. From the root word *phobia*—associated with Phobos, the god of fear—springs a host of terms such as *agoraphobia* (fear of public spaces) and its companion *enochlophobia* (fear of crowds). Critter creepies include *arachnophobia* (fear of spiders) and the all-encompassing *zoophobia* (fear of animals). Of course, if you suffer from *phobophobia* (fear of phobias), you'll probably avoid plumbing the depths of human fears in the first place.

Word Power ANSWERS

1. tantalize **(B)** *tease*
The freshly baked pastries in the bakery window tantalize passing joggers.

2. zephyr **(A)** *gentle west wind*
The desert willow's leaves fluttered in the evening zephyr.

3. Sisyphean **(A)** *constant and ineffective*
Lawmakers tackled the Sisyphean task of balancing the budget.

4. halcyon **(C)** *idyllically calm*
Elena longed for the halcyon days of her childhood.

5. heliotropic **(C)** *sun-following*
Heliotropic flowers shift position throughout the day to face the sun.

6. nemesis **(B)** *archrival*
At Reichenbach Falls, Sherlock Holmes confronted his nemesis, Professor Moriarty.

7. iridescent **(A)** *rainbow hued*
The emerald ash borer, a beetle with iridescent green wings, is native to northeastern Asia.

8. lethargy **(A)** *lack of energy*
Lucas had trouble shaking off his lethargy after a long flight.

9. labyrinth **(B)** *maze*
The forest contained a labyrinth of intersecting trails.

10. psyche **(C)** *soul*
War takes a toll on the human psyche.

11. stentorian **(B)** *extremely loud*
Terry celebrated victory with a stentorian whoop that echoed throughout the arena.

12. hector **(B)** *bully*
Selma intervened when she saw the teenagers hector the kindergarten students.

13. mnemonic **(A)** *memory device*
HOMES is a helpful mnemonic for the Great Lakes: Huron, Ontario, Michigan, Erie and Superior.

14. aegis **(B)** *patronage*
Artists worked under the aegis of the humanities council.

15. hedonist **(B)** *pursuer of pleasure*
Alexander lived like a hedonist while on the family cruise.

Vocabulary Ratings

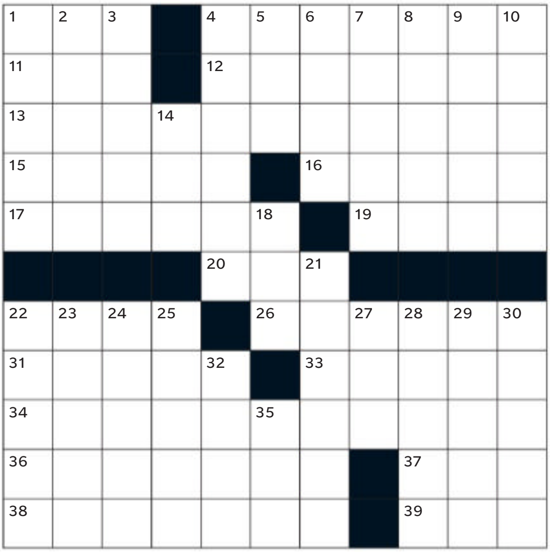
9 & BELOW: Hero
10–12: Titan
13–15: Olympian

ANTAGAIN/GETTY IMAGES

CROSSWORD

Heartfelt Message

BY *Derek Bowman*



ACROSS

1 And so on: Abbr.
4 Like a blue jay
11 Curler Sweeting
12 Laura Secord, to many
13 With 34-Across, heartfelt message: 3 words
15 Adorable one
16 Winter boot brand
17 Letter-shaped piece of clothing that may have a message on it: Hyph.
19 They come and go
20 ___ pad (scrubber)
22 Easy math calculations
26 Baby attire that may have a message (or a mess) on it
31 Broadcasting: 2 words
33 "That irks me": 2 words
34 See 13-Across: 4 words
36 Like some exercises
37 Prefix with centre
38 Chopped leafy green
39 Sault ___ Marie, Ont.

DOWN

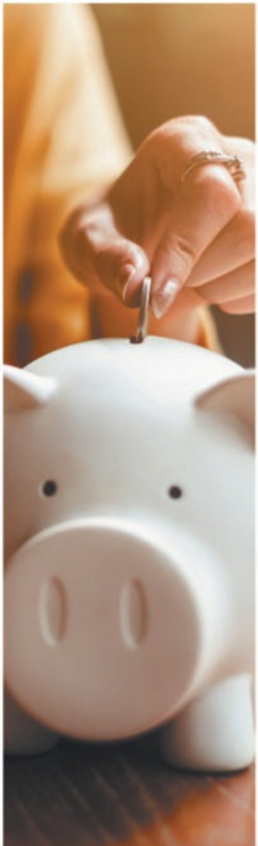
1 Kick out, as a tenant
2 Ankle bone
3 Dust collector
4 Roots (for)
5 TV remote button
6 Stretches of time
7 ___ a gun: 2 words
8 Pageant crown
9 Wrapped up
10 Good bargains
14 Seven, in Roman numerals
18 Excessively
21 Tattletale
22 Chesterfields, for example
23 Bob Rae's diplomatic position, for short: 2 words
24 Language from which the words "kiwi" and "mako" come
25 Governor General Mary
27 Music related to punk
28 Small, medium and large
29 Bumbling
30 Goalie Belfour, to his friends
32 Sitcom with the theme "I'm a Survivor"
35 Sound that might be tough to get rid of

For answers, turn to PAGE 92



A TRUSTED FRIEND IN A COMPLICATED WORLD

Safe Harbour by Julia Breckenreid, exclusively for *Reader's Digest*


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